DOCTORAL THESIS

Immigrant Activism in Greece before and during the Crisis (2000-2015)
Organisation, Alliances, and Litigation

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Immigrant Activism in Greece before and during the Crisis (2000-2015): Organisation, Alliances, and Litigation

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Abstract

Migration, in mainstream discourses, is mainly framed as a 'threat', a 'risk', or an 'opportunity' for capitalist growth and development. In contrast, this thesis sees immigrants and refugees as an integral part of the contemporary working class and explores its multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural, and multi-gendered character. Thus, it points towards a potential new 'We' in the making, based on solidarity and cross-fertilisation of ideas and practices between immigrant and native workers.

Linking critical migration studies to political philosophy, and social movement approaches to critical legal studies, this thesis explores a wide variety of immigrant activism cases that illustrate their militant, innovative and impactful political engagements. Notably, the research sheds light on the impact of the Greek crisis on immigrant and refugee communities and relates their collective responses in the post-2008 period to immigrant militancy during the 2000s. Although Greece is the central focus of this research, these distinctive stories of labour and feminist organising, citizenship struggles and justice campaigns, are situated within the European context and a broader internationalist perspective. To this end, it draws attention to transnational identities and solidarities connecting stories from Africa, Asia, the Balkans, and Western Europe.

As opposed to post-hegemonic approaches, this thesis proposes a collaborative strategising research and explains its distinctive features as a mutual learning process based on dialogue, trust, and solidarity. Using 14 life history interviews with immigrant activists and 6 semi-structured interviews with lawyers, this research brings focus into various aspects related to the question of organisation, as well as social alliances and litigation. By highlighting past victories, drawing lessons from defeats, and identifying 'best practice' activism, this thesis shows how immigrant activists contributed to a deeper understanding of the stakes of the crisis and a way out of it.

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Acronyms

ACAP	Anti-fascist Coordination of Athens and Piraeus
ADEDY	Civil Servants' Confederation
AIFR	Albanian Immigrant Forum of Rethymno
AK	Antiauthoritarian Movement of Athens
ANEL	Independent Greeks right-wing party
ANSA	National Associated Press Agency of Italy
ANTARSYA	Anticapitalist Left Cooperation
AoM	Autonomy of Migration
AREN	Left Unity student organisation
ARSIS	Social Association for the Support of Youth
ASEP	Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection
AUEB	Athens University of Economics and Business
AUTH	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
BIWUG	Bangladeshi Immigrant Workers' Union of Greece
CADTM	Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt
CAI	Centre of Albanian Immigrants
CC	Coordinating Committee of immigrant associations, communities and unions
CCS	Critical Citizenship Studies
CEPIA	Committee against the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum
CFI	Cretan Forum of Immigrants
CGRA	General Commissioner for Refugees and Stateless Persons
CHAT	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
CIMMA	Council for the Integration of Migrants of the Municipality of Athens
CWTUA	Construction Workers Trade Union of Athens
DAP	student wing of New Democracy

DES ME	Network for the Empowerment and Support of Migrant Women
DIDF	Federation of Democratic Workers' Associations
Diktyo	Network for Political and Social Rights
Diotima	Centre for Research on Women's Issues
DOE	Greek Primary Teachers' Federation
EAAK	United Independent Left Movement
EAM	National Liberation Front
EAPN	Hellenic Anti-Poverty Network
ECB	European Central Bank
ECCP	European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EDA	United Democratic Left
EEDYE	Committee for International Détente and Peace
EEK	Workers' Revolutionary Party
EKA	Centre of Athens Labor Unions
ENPAD	European Network of People of African Decent
FACG	Federation of Albanian Communities in Greece
FEMM	European Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
FGTB	General Labour Federation of Belgium
FISE	World Federation of Teachers Unions
GCR	Greek Council for Refugees
GDW	Golden Dawn Watch
GFM	Greek Forum of Migrants
GLRMR	Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees
GNCHR	Greek National Commission for Human Rights
GSEE	Greek General Confederation of Labour
GTSA	Greek Transgender Support Association

HLHR	Hellenic League for Human Rights
i-RED	Institute for Rights Equality and Development
IADL	International Association of Democratic Lawyers
ICA	Insurrectionary Collective Action
IMEPO	Hellenic Migration Policy Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INE/GSEE	Labour Institute of the Greek General Confederation of Labour
ISAP	Athens–Piraeus Electric Railways S.A.
IST	International Socialist Tendency
ITUC	International Trade Union Cooperation
KAR	Movement to Deport Racism
KASAPI-Hellas	Unity of Filipino Migrant Workers in Greece
KEDDE	Movement for Liberties and Democratic Rights of Our Time
KEERFA	Movement United Against Racism and the Fascist Threat
KKE	Communist Party of Greece
KNE	Communist Youth of Greece
KOE	Communist Organisation of Greece
MAA	Maghreb Arabi Association
MCRG	Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAR	New Left Current
ND	New Democracy
NSSIR	Network for the Social Support to Immigrants and Refugees
OAED	Labour Employment Office
OER	Organization of Nationalists Rethymno
OIELE	Greek Federation of Private School Teachers

OIYE	Federation of Private Employees
OKDE-SPARTAKOS	Organization of Communist Internationalists of Greece - Spartacus
OLME	Greek Federation of Secondary Education State School Teachers
ONNED	New Democracy Youth
PAME	All-Workers Militant Front
PASOK	Panhellenic Socialist Movement
PASP	student wing of PASOK
PEKOP	Panattic Union of Cleaners and Domestic Personnel
PICUM	Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
PKS	All-students Unionist Movement
PNMW	Panhellenic Network of Migrant Women
POE-OTA	Panhellenic Federation of Employees in Local Authorities
PTB	Workers' Party of Belgium
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SEK	Greek Socialist Worker's Party
SEPE	Body of Labour Inspectors
SIP	Secretariat of the Immigrants of PAME
SKYA	Assembly for the Circulation of Struggles
SMT	Union of Technical Employees
SRT	Social Reproduction Theory
SSM	Waiters and Chefs' Union
StWC	Stop the War Coalition
SVEOD	Assembly of Workers on Motorbikes
SWP	British Socialist Workers Party
SYRIZA	Coalition of Radical Left
TINA	There Is No Alternative'
TUTCLWA	Trade Union of Textile-Clothing and Leather Workers of Attica

UACG	Union of African Communities of Greece
UAWO	United African Women Organization
UECRA	Union of Employees in Commerce-Retail of Athens
UGG	Union of Guinea of Greece
UIW	Union of Immigrant Workers
UN OHCHR	UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USB	Unione Sindacale di Base
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
YRE	Youth against Racism in Europe

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of all the immigrants who have lost their lives due to racism and xenophobia. To honour their memory is to continue in the struggle for justice.

Introduction

In what is often called ‘the long summer of migration’ of 2015, over one million immigrants and refugees reached Europe from across the Mediterranean, mainly through Greece and Italy, with almost 4,000 feared drowned (Clayton and Holland, 2015). In the public debate, the mass arrival of immigrants and refugees has been predominantly labelled a ‘refugee crisis’. This label was linked to a wider discourse, framing migration as a ‘risk’, a ‘threat’ and an ‘opportunity’ for capitalist growth and development. This discourse of crisis was in turn connected to EU policies aimed at border enforcement and immigration policing in response to the ‘crisis’. These policies led to widespread violations of rights and obligations established under international law, mostly evident in the situation on Greece’s Aegean Islands, which became prisons for thousands of immigrants and refugees.

While these policies marked a turning point in terms of their severe consequences, they aligned with the EU legislative framework that has existed for nearly three decades. This framework is related to humanitarian reason, described by Didier Fassin as the ‘new moral economy’ (2005: 371) according to which ‘domination is transformed into misfortune, injustice is articulated as suffering, violence is expressed in terms of trauma’ (Fassin, 2012: 6). Further, it is based on what Raia Apostolova (2015) identifies as a type of categorical fetishism that naturalises the boundary between immigrants and refugees and promotes an individualistic frame that erases the dimension of ‘migrant’ as a signifier of social class. Over the last few years, this naturalised boundary has been widely criticised by immigrants themselves as well as by grassroots support groups, radical lawyers, and researchers from different disciplines. The only way not to fall victim to categorical fetishism, Apostolova (2015) notes, is to expose the concrete realities such categories represent and entail.

Along these lines, I decided to explore the situation of immigrants and refugees in Greece from the start of the 21st century until 2015, with glimpses of the realities in the post-2015 period. The 15 years that are my main focus are divided in two phases, with the 2010 Greek bailout programme and drastic

austerity measures drawing the demarcation line between the two. Giving due consideration to the destructive consequences of the economic adjustment programme for Greece, the research addresses the impact of the crisis on immigrant and refugee communities and their responses to it. My main hypothesis is that during this broader period (2000–2015), a minority of Greece's immigrant population engaged in political practices in various militant, innovative and impactful ways.

This led me to devise the following research questions:

1) Under what conditions has this militant minority challenged the passive role of 'pitiful victims' and moved to a position of action?

2) In what already existing organisational structures have the immigrants and refugees participated, and what new structures have they created in order to achieve their aims?

3) Focusing on those immigrants and refugees who were politically engaged before arriving in Greece, what was the role of their political formation in their later activism?

4) How have they been embraced by the trade unions, local anti-racist organisations and the Greek Left?

5) To what extent have they engaged in legal struggles, and with what results?

While the research process proved to be far more contingent than I could have imagined, the major challenge was not to lose sight of these five research questions. Linking critical migration studies to political philosophy and social movement approaches to critical legal studies, the thesis addresses the research questions by exploring a wide variety of immigrant activism cases, identifying their achievements, difficulties, failings, defeats and 'best practice' activism. To meet these aims, this interdisciplinary study is based on a philosophy of praxis approach inspired by Antonio Gramsci. As he expresses it:

> The philosophy of praxis does not aim at the peaceful resolution of existing contradictions in history and society but is rather the very theory of these contradictions. It is not the instrument of government of the dominant groups in order to gain the consent of and exercise hegemony over the subaltern classes; it is the expression of these subaltern classes who want to educate themselves in the art of government and who have an interest in knowing all truths, even the unpleasant ones, and in avoiding the (impossible) deceptions of the upper class and —even more— their own.
>
> (Gramsci, 1932: 395–6, cited in Thomas, 2015)

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis comprises four parts. Part A (Chapters 1-3) details the theory and method. Chapter 1 presents an interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological framework that provides guiding perspectives for my research. Through a series of dialogues, the chapter builds connections between concepts, thinkers and 'schools of thought'. This presentation begins with contemporary readings of Fanon and his contribution to a post-colonial perspective and subsequent understanding of the role of racism and anti-racism. Secondly, it discusses Giorgio Agamben and proceeds with a critical assessment of and his formulations on 'bare life' and the figure of the refugee.

The chapter then sets the scene for a dialogue between Gramscian views on migration, the Autonomy of Migration (AoM) perspective and 'acts of citizenship' literature. This is accompanied by a critique of post-hegemony, with a focus on the debate on citizenship struggles. Next, it attempts to find a third way between legal liberalism and legal nihilism. Following that, the chapter discusses militant investigations, feminisms and social movement theory, with the aim to shed light on the main concepts behind the proposed method of co-strategising research. Finally, it details the specific methods applied in the thesis, with a focus on life history interviews, and offers some self-reflexive thoughts.

Chapter 2 examines immigrant participation in the December 2008 uprising in Greece after the police murder of a 15-year-old Greek student in Athens. The chapter identifies some distinctive features of the December 2008 uprising and highlights the implications of non-citizenship for immigrant political participation. By placing the uprising into a specific theoretical and political context and by reviewing

debates on organisation, demands and alliance building, Chapter 2 defines the theoretical framework as the lens through which the empirical material is analysed in Part B.

In Chapter 3, the theoretical and methodological framework is further concretised in the specific social and political context of Greece after 2008 and sets the scene for the empirical chapters in Part C. More precisely, Chapter 3 elaborates on the hypothesis that Greece was turned into a laboratory of neo-colonialism and resistance after the 2008 global capitalist crisis. This hypothesis is related to the immigrant question, with further analysis of the specificities of neo-colonialism in Greece. The chapter suggests rethinking the issue of popular sovereignty through the lens of immigration and reviews debates on the conception of the people and contemporary readings of Gramsci's idea of the national-popular.

Part B and Part C present the empirical research and findings. Part B (Chapters 4-6) suggests rethinking immigrant participation in the uprising as the culmination of a long chain of prior protest events during the 2000s. To that end, it includes findings from four life history interviews with immigrant activists. These relate to labour and feminist organising, citizenship struggles and justice campaigns in Athens, Greece's capital and its largest city.

Chapter 4 provides a view of the struggle to build a militant union in the cleaning sector, where the vast majority of the employees are immigrant women. To this end, it presents the story of Konstantina Kuneva, general secretary of the Panattic Union of Cleaners and Domestic Personnel (PEKOP) and former Member of the European Parliament (MEP). The story of Kuneva and her trade union activities are situated within the broader efforts of militant unionism in the 2000s. Kuneva's story involves gender-based violence at work and union-busting tactics used to deprive workers of their political subjectivity. Further, this chapter examines distinctive features of the impressive solidarity movement for Kuneva after the acid attack against her in late December 2008, identifying this movement as the

second phase of the uprising. Finally, it offers insights into the composition, demands and legal aspects of the solidarity movement.

Chapter 5 focuses on 'second-generation immigrants' and the struggle for the right to Greek citizenship. First, the story of Michael Afolayan sheds light on the campaign 'No to racism from the baby's cot' from the perspective of children deprived of their right to Greek citizenship. Second, the story of Loretta Macauley, president of the United African Women's Organisation (UAWO), reveals African women's contribution to the campaign and situates this within a broader practice of sisterhood and struggle in line with Black feminist and Afro-feminist traditions. Third, the chapter sheds light on the mass mobilisation of 'second-generation immigrants' in the December 2008 uprising, focusing on the role of an active political group of young Albanian immigrants. Finally, it offers insights into the legal and political debates around the right to Greek citizenship and draws attention to 'hybrid' identity behind the term 'second-generation immigrant' and its implications for collective action.

Chapter 6 explores a case of alliance building between an immigrant association and parts of the Greek Left. For this reason, it follows the activity of the Pakistani Community of Greece Unity through the story of its president, Javed Aslam. Aslam's story explains how Unity forged a strong alliance with Stop the War Coalition (StWC) and the Socialist Workers' Party (SEK) following unprecedented challenges in the pre-2008 period related to an abduction scandal and an extradition request. Further, the chapter reveals the importance of these alliances before and during the December 2008 uprising and highlights how Pakistani immigrants managed to claim their own public voice.

Part C (Chapters 7-11) of the thesis focuses on the impact of the Greek crisis on immigrant communities after 2008, arguing that in decisive moments of the struggle in Greece, immigrant workers took the lead. This part includes findings from seven life history interviews with immigrant activists, combining urban, rural and transnational experiences of struggle.

Chapter 7 introduces two refugees, both now living in Brussels, whose stories shed light on the immigrant situation in Greece after the eruption of the 2008 global capitalist crisis. Both stories present asylum cases with far-reaching political and legal implications. Mohammed Khatib's story addresses reception conditions for newly arrived immigrants in Greece, especially immigrants in transit. Mamadou Bah's story details the activities of the Union of African Communities of Greece (UACG) in Athens and offers insights on the impact of crisis and racism on immigrants' lives and collective action. Following that, the chapter de-centres the Greek national context and provides a view of transnational activism, highlighting the legacy of the anti-colonial past in different geographies connecting the Middle East, West Africa and Europe.

Chapter 8 explores organised immigrant resistance against the rising fascist threat in crisis-ridden Greece. Returning to the Pakistani Community of Greece Unity, the chapter follows its activities in the post-2008 period, namely its alliances with the Movement United against Racism and the Fascist Threat (KEERFA) and the Union of Immigrant Workers (UIW). Javed Aslam's story reveals the contribution of Pakistani immigrants in the movements of the broader period, as well as the Pakistani Community's specific strategies against racist crimes. The chapter examines grassroots and institutional responses after the murder of Pakistani worker Shehzad Luqman and of the Greek rapper Pavlos Fyssas, both committed by the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn political party in 2013. To that end, the chapter then focuses on the trial of Golden Dawn, the biggest trial of a fascist criminal organisation since Nuremberg, identifying strategic moves on the part of the anti-fascist movement and related legal strategies.

Chapter 9 reflects on hunger strikes as a form of immigrant protest through the six-week hunger strike conducted by 300 immigrant workers from Maghreb at the beginning of 2011. 'Travelling' from Athens to the urban areas on the island of Crete, the chapter presents immigrant collectivities built on the island during the 2000s and reveals decisive experiences of struggle through the stories of two immigrants. The story of Liljana Saliaj, a member of the solidarity initiative for the 300, involves the

immigrants' centre of Rethymno and the local anti-racist movement. The story of ML, one of the hunger strikers and a member of the Maghreb Arabi Association (MAA), explains how the unbearable lives of undocumented immigrants during the Greek crisis led them to launch the biggest hunger strike conducted by immigrants in the country's history. The chapter elaborates on state and the media responses to the strike and identifies distinctive features of the solidarity movement for the 300 strikers and the legacy of their struggle.

Chapter 10 provides additional perspectives on militant unionism related to the All-Workers Militant Front (PAME) and focuses on the relationship between immigrant workers and the trade unions of PAME. To this end, it presents the stories of Seyit Aldoğan and Ahmet Mustafa, which reveal PAME's contribution to immigrant organising and struggles in the early 2000s and the 2010s, respectively. Both their stories offer insights into trade union responses to the new challenges of crisis and racism. In addition, the chapter provides an example of alliance building between PAME and the Bangladeshi Immigrant Workers' Union of Greece (BIWUG) and elaborates on their common struggles in the garment industry in Athens, as well as related legal strategies.

Chapter 11 presents a different aspect of immigrant workers' struggles, away from urban centres, focusing instead on the overexploitation of immigrant labour in intensive agriculture. Situating Greece in a wider global context, the chapter draws on related experiences in Southern Italy and examines the case of Manolada, which became known as one of the leading examples of immigrant farmworkers standing up for their rights in Greece. Exploring previous struggle experiences, this chapter studies the large-scale protests that took place after the shooting of Bangladeshi workers by armed guards in 2013, focusing particularly on the role of solidarity networks, including PAME, BIWUG, KEERFA and UIW. The story of Morshed Chowdury, one of the injured workers in the shootings and lead applicant in the related ECHR case, reveals working and living conditions in Manolada, the workers' struggle and related legal strategies after the farm shooting.

Part D, Chapter 12 tries to link key findings of this thesis with more recent developments after the 2015 ‘long summer of migration’. This chapter critically engages with Slavoj Žižek’s analyses of the Greek crisis, including his position on the July 2015 referendum and the so-called ‘refugee crisis’. Using this prism and based on preliminary findings on the refugee solidarity movement, the chapter points to specific directions for further research.

This thesis ends with an overall appraisal of the empirical material, along with a summary of the main findings, highlighting the specific contributions this research aspires to make.

Part A

Chapter 1: On Theory and Method

1.1 Introduction

It has been argued that human migration will be a defining issue of 21st century. Several theoretical frameworks have been proposed to understand the central issues around the figure of the immigrant and refugee and its historical implications. The aim of this first chapter is to outline the theoretical and methodological framework applied in this thesis. To achieve this aim, the chapter articulates a series of interdisciplinary dialogues that build connections between concepts, thinkers and 'schools of thought'. Gradually, the chapter reveals the main aspects of the theory and method, explaining what co-strategising research is and why it is applied in this thesis. Having set the scene, the chapter then presents the specific methods used, focusing on life history interviews. It closes with some self-reflexive thoughts.

1.2 'How Do We De-Colonise?' Understanding Racism and Anti-racism through Contemporary Readings of Fanon

This chapter begins by elaborating on racism, anti-racism, and the legacy of anti-colonialism, proposing such an understanding as a useful starting point in my engagement with immigrant activism. To achieve this aim, I present contemporary readings of Fanon's work and delve into concepts that are central to the analytical framework by which this study proceeds. Ranabir Samaddar, whose work has been very influential on this thesis, builds on Fanon's work in his attempts 'to lodge anti-colonial political consciousness at the heart of a theory of the political subject' (Samaddar, 2009: 206). In this context, he offers useful insights summarising Fanon's legacy:

> Fanon, I suggest, did not teach us: What is colonialism? Or, what is occupation? But, rather, how do we de-colonise? How do we cleanse ourselves of centuries of occupation of our homes, bodies, and selves? This was the mark of an agenda of the political subject. Fanon compels this return even today, more than ever, when neo-colonialism combined with globalisation and neo-liberalism persuades us to forget politics altogether—either in the name of cultural studies, or postcolonial studies, or in the name of commerce, economy, and intellectual rights.
>
> (Samaddar, 2009: 208)

Samaddar (2016: 119) notes that post-colonial critique provides a dialectical mode of analysing contemporary capitalism and suggests that 'there is much to learn from the vast reservoir of anti-colonial politics in the present phase of the global struggle for ending capitalism'.[1]

In what follows, I discuss Fanon's description of the lives of the colonised as existing in 'a zone of nonbeing'—what he describes in his seminal study *Black Skin, White Masks* as 'an extraordinarily sterile and arid region' (2008: 2). In his analysis of Fanon's work, Lewis Gordon (1995: 137) relates the 'zone of non-being' to Black existence attempting to be seen in a world in which its mere appearance is a violation of societal norms. As he explains: 'to be seen in a racist way is an ironic way of not being seen through being seen', what he calls an 'overdetermined anonymity' that amounts to invisibility (Ibid: 58). In a similar vein, Peter Hudis draws attention to the social conditions that, over time, create this way of 'seeing' and shape the view the colonised have of themselves:

> They are 'fixed' and defined by the 'gaze' of the Other. Their 'being' is defined by the Other —not by themselves. The black comes to see themselves as 'black' because of the distorted gaze of the white— who is unaware, of course, that their way of 'seeing' the Other is a result of the peculiar nature of colonial and racial domination.
>
> (Hudis, 2015: 31)

Fanon (2008) skilfully uses his psychiatric expertise to offer insights into two interrelated phenomena: *inferiority complex* and *petrification*. Hudis (2015: 47) explains that those who are treated as less than human[2] because of the colour of their skin, the language they speak or the religious beliefs they hold

[1] For debates on different conceptions of post-colonial theory, see Samaddar (2018).
[2] As Cornell (2014: 125) insightfully comments: 'When the colonized are treated as less than human, they are treated as creatures that do not have a culture worth taking into account'.

often suffer from an inferiority complex, which is the tendency of the oppressed to interiorise their oppression and seek acceptance from the oppressor on its terms. This kind of inferiority complex is not meant to be understood as an 'individual' problem that can be solved on a purely psychological level; rather, it is a socially rooted phenomenon that cannot be solved if the psychological aspect is ignored (Hudis, 2015: 37).[3] The second phenomenon, petrification, is mostly related to the impact of fear. As Douglas Ficek writes:

> 'Petrification' evokes the monstrosity of colonialism. When we are terrified, horrified, or frightened, we sometimes become 'petrified with fear'. We cannot move; we cannot scream. Agency abandons us —or is taken from us— and for a few moments we are stuck in time.
>
> (Ficek, 2011: 77)

Fanon shows that while being denied agency and freedom is an everyday experience for the colonised people, at most, they can be pseudo-petrified —that is, forced into a state of habitual obedience, which is simultaneously a state of socio-political hibernation (Ficek, 2011: 77). They cannot be petrified completely. This position has important consequences for social and political practice and is connected to Fanon's insistence on the possibility of an authentic upheaval emerging from the zone of the non-being (Fanon, 2008: 2). More precisely, I adopt the notion of *autonomous political will*, which, according to Peter Hallward, is the central notion in Fanon's work. Hallward elaborates on the genealogy of this notion:

> This is the notion that Rousseau and the Jacobins put at the divisive center of modern politics. It is the practice that, after Hegel and Marx, Lenin confirmed as the central element of modern revolutionary experience; the practice that Fanon's own revolutionary contemporaries (Mao, Castro, Guevara, Giap, Mandela) preserved as their guiding frame of reference. It is also the notion most thoroughly forgotten if not repressed, in both theory and practice, by the discipline that in recent decades has largely appropriated Fanon's legacy: postcolonial studies.
>
> (Hallward, 2011: 213)

[3] Fanon (2008: 4) seeks the origins of the inferiority complex at the socio-economic level, which subsequently takes the form of what he describes as the 'epidermalization of inferiority'.

Considering the above, a question that merits attention is whether Fanon's conceptual tools and frames, which have historically been applied to the so-called 'Third World' colonised countries, can be equally applied to advanced capitalist societies, or not. As Peter Worsley argued in 1972, the notion of the 'Third World' refers to a set of relationships, not to a set of countries; it can exist in both Guinea and in the United States, in the still colonies, the ex-colonies and the most advanced heartlands of the capitalist world (Worsley, 1972: 220). In this context, Fanon's analysis informs the thesis' understanding of the various issues in play and, most importantly, the impact of racism on immigrant and refugee communities in Greece and the possibilities for mobilising popular political will. David Farrier and Patricia Tuitt contend that Fanon and post-colonial critique give concrete expression to a phenomenon that often seems to disappear behind grand abstractions, yet ensures that refugees are not reduced to mere victims:

> Our stark portrayal of what may seem at one level to be desperate acts and hopeless actions offers, at another, a glimpse of future political horizons in which those same acts and actions that we sometimes tend to dismiss as impotent recover their legitimate force.
>
> (Farrier and Tuitt, 2013: 268)

It is noteworthy that several theorists have applied Fanon's conceptual tools and frames in the last few years to analyse contemporary realities in different parts of the world. An example that has been methodologically influential for this study is the work of Ciccariello-Maher (2010) who has applied Fanon's philosophy to the political discourse and identity dynamics in contemporary Venezuela. For example, Ciccariello-Maher's (Ibid: 4) reflections on violence proved useful to understanding several issues that arose during this research. As he states: 'Fanon's theory of symbolic ontological violence, then, could be summarized in these three words: making oneself known' (Ibid: 4).[4]

[4] Immanuel Wallerstein (2009) identifies the use of violence as one of the three dilemmas discussed by Fanon and with which we must deal in the 21st century. The other two revolve around the class struggle and the assertion of identity.

As Ciccariello-Maher explains of the symbolic function of this violent self-assertion and public appearance of colonised and racialised non-beings, it creates the necessary groundwork for their entry into being (Ibid: 1). For racialised subjects, the very act of appearing, of making oneself known, is violent both for its ontological implications, undoing the exclusionary barriers of ontology, and for its inevitable reception (Ibid: 5, 6). For Ciccariello-Maher, the use of violence that moves towards the decolonisation of being is incommensurable in both its actual and (more fundamental) symbolic forms with the violence of the coloniser (Ibid: 12):

> To judge all 'violences' as equal would be to fall into a severe formalism which is both useless and erroneous: useless through neglect of the functional *content* of different violences and erroneous through neglect of the fact that formal characterization as 'violent' is always-already tainted by symbolic function.
>
> (Ciccariello-Maher, 2010: 10)

In the same spirit, Cornell points out that in Fanon's thought, asserting a certain form of subjectivity is integrally tied to the movements that bring to life the cultural and intellectual traditions of the colonised, as well as the spontaneous violence and rage that result from the claim that one is human and can fight back (Cornell, 2014: 126). Further, based on Fanon and the entire revolutionary African and Afro-Caribbean intellectual heritage, Cornell offers the following concluding remark that I used as a guideline in all stages of my research:

> We are never reduced to just bare life. My point is that the massive upheavals of anti-colonial struggles in Africa and the continuing struggles against anti-black racism point precisely to the dissensus inherent in the demand that 'I am black, I am human, and I am your equal'. That declaration lies at the heart of Fanonian politics.[5]
>
> (Cornell, 2014: 134)

[5] Rancière (2010: 69) defines a dissensus as follows: 'A dissensus is not a conflict of interests, opinions or values; it is a division inserted in "common sense": a dispute over what is given and about the frame within which we see something as given'.

1.3 Why Agamben Fails to Theorise Immigrant Activism

This chapter proceeds by critically engaging with Agamben's influential work, which has been the subject of a heated debate in contemporary radical philosophy. In contrast to Fanon's insistence on the possibility of an authentic upheaval emerging from the zone of the non-being, I argue that Giorgio Agamben severely underestimates the emancipatory potential of the collective activity of the 'wretched of the earth'. Before proceeding with a critique of Agamben's work, I will briefly refer to his conceptual framework. Agamben argues that the refugee deserves to be regarded as the central figure of our political history. The paradox, as he notes, is that this very figure who should embody human rights more than any other, marks instead the radical crisis of the concept (Agamben, 2000). He sees in the refugee the key by which the sacred texts of sovereignty and the very codes of political power unveil their mysteries (Agamben, 1998: 12). He mainly uses the concept of 'bare life' to describe the figure of the refugee: the life of *homo sacer* (sacred man), a figure in Ancient Roman law whom anyone could kill without committing a murder in the legal sense.

To pursue this further, Agamben reflects on the concentration camp, 'the place in which the most absolute *conditio inhumana* that has ever existed on earth was realized' (Agamben, 1998: 166), and provides a though-provoking exploration of its metamorphoses in the contemporary world. To this end, he follows what he calls an inverse line of inquiry, meaning that instead of deducing the definition of the camp from the events that took place there, he raises the question: What is a camp, and what is the juridico-political structure that enabled such events to take place there? (Ibid). Of course, his inquiry has its own philosophical presuppositions, mainly in dialogue with Michel Foucault's notion of 'biopolitics', Carl Schmitt's definition of 'the sovereign', Walter Benjamin's appropriation of the concept of the 'state of exception' and Hannah Arendt's insightful comments on 'human rights'. While examining the evolution of the above concepts in Agamben's work exceeds the scope of this research, I provide an indicative quotation by Arendt that speaks directly to the contemporary situation of immigrants and refugees, even though it was written in the immediate post-WWII period:

> The conception of human rights, based upon the assumed existence of a human being as such, broke down at the very moment when those who professed to believe in it were for the first time confronted with people who had indeed lost all other qualities and specific relationships—except that they were still human. The world found nothing sacred in the abstract nakedness of being human.
>
> (Arendt, 1994: 292)

The main idea behind Agamben's analysis of the camp is that it inaugurates a new juridico-political paradigm in which the norm becomes indistinguishable from the exception (Agamben, 1998: 109). Agamben explains that the Nazis, who operated thousands of concentration camps in Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe before and during WWII, followed a practice consolidated by previous governments and, at the same time, introduced an important novelty to that practice. The state of exception ceased to be referred to as an external and provisional state of factual danger and came to be confused with juridical rule itself. Put differently, in the camps, the state of exception, which was essentially a temporary suspension of the rule of law on the basis of a factual state of danger, was given a permanent spatial arrangement (Ibid: 108).

Agamben's inquiry leads him to regard the concentration camp 'as the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West' (1998: 102). Instead of examining the camp as a historical fact belonging to the past, Agamben describes it as 'the hidden matrix and *nomos* of the political space in which we are still living' (Ibid: 166). As a result, one of his main suggestions is to learn to recognise the camp in all of its metamorphoses (Agamben, 2000: 15-29). This idea comes to resonate strongly when I examine the detention centres for immigrants around the world[6] and, more precisely, those along the eastern borders of Greece, which are also the exterior borders of the European Union. In this context, trying to

[6] From that perspective, it is interesting to follow the debate that occurred in the summer of 2019 around the statement that 'the US is running concentration camps on our southern border' by the congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in an Instagram live stream. For more information about this debate, see Kulwin (2019) and McClay (2019).

recognise the camp in all its metamorphoses, as this thesis does, sheds light on the externalised European borders, a core theme that runs throughout this research.[7]

On the other hand, several objections have been raised against Agamben's main formulations. Simon Behrman (2013) points out the most significant gap in Agamben's work:

> Struggle is almost wholly absent in his work, except occasionally at the level of ideas. He never acknowledges anyone anywhere in Western history struggling from below. Instead, we are presented with a history of kings and clerics devising new forms of power, assisted by theologians and philosophers.
>
> (Behrman, 2013)

In a similar vein, Andreas Kalyvas (2005: 112) notes that Agamben leaves the impression that the disastrous triumph of sovereign power might have been guided by the iron hand of historical necessity all the way to the camps. Kalyvas' critique lies in the fact that in this historical reconstruction of sovereign power, there is no room for alterity and the event, no space for ontological creation and radical otherness (Kalyvas, 2005: 110). That is, Agamben underestimates the reasons, forces, interests, struggles, movements, strategies, and actors that were and still are involved in the unfolding of bio-sovereignty (Kalyvas, 2005: 112).

Interestingly, Nina Power draws a parallel between Agamben's work and that of Heidegger: 'Agamben shares Heidegger's distaste for "activity" and "will" deeming such concepts insuperably metaphysical. He thus demeans, unintentionally perhaps, the real forces at work in labor' (Power, 2010). Antonis Balasopoulos (2012: 5) situates Agamben's approach within a broader turn towards 'an antipolitics of quasi-nihilistic catastrophism' and argues that Agamben's own critique ironically legitimates the

[7] As Afailal and Fernandez (2018) explain: 'The construction of the externalised European borders represents a new form of coloniality, classifying the population (migrant vs. EU citizen) and the countries (EU members vs. countries where control has been externalised to) according to the level of threat they represent for the EU'.

preemptive ban on the very possibility of collective political action, since it renders the prospects of emancipatory subjectivization always already impossible.

As Rancière insightfully comments, Agamben's thought leads to a 'biopolitical' trap whereby the executioner and the victim appear as two parts of the same 'biopolitical' body:

> Any kind of claim to rights or any struggle enacting rights is thus trapped from the very outset in the mere polarity of bare life and the state of exception, a polarity that appears as a sort of ontological destiny: we are all, every single one of us, in the same situation as the refugee in a camp. Differences between totalitarianism and democracy grow faint and political practice turns out to be always already caught in the biopolitical trap.
>
> (Rancière, 2010: 66)

While Agamben notes that he has no intention to 'belittle the conquests and accomplishments of democracy' (Agamben, 1998: 9), he never reflects on the philosophical, theoretical and political implications of these accomplishments. Worse, Agamben excludes *a priori* the possibility of legal terrain as one of struggle and falls into the trap of what this thesis identifies as 'a legal nihilist viewpoint'. By contrast, Kalyvas (2005: 115) argues that as much as law is a tool of sovereign power, it also grants citizens fundamental rights that they can use against sovereign power.

Another aspect of Agamben's work that has been much criticised is his underestimation of the 'racialised way citizenship functions in modern states' (Basevich, 2012: 61). David Farrier and Patricia Tuitt (2013) criticise Agamben for failing to consider either the influence of race or the heritage of colonialism. (Ibid: 258). Likewise, Peter Gratton (2010: 109) argues that the 'state of exception' that is so prevalent in recent literature was and is the permanent apparatus of colonialism, internal and external to Western states.

In light of the above, I conclude that Agamben's conceptual tools and frames are ineffective and misleading for activist theorising.

1.4 Critical Perspectives on Migration, and Citizenship: Recent Developments and the Trap of Post-hegemony

To determine additional key factors that influenced this study's analytical framework, I bring different elements of critical literature, concerned with migration, citizenship struggles and hegemony, into dialogue with one another considering their recent developments. On the one hand, I reveal the ongoing debates on hegemony, which draw a demarcation line between these strands; on the other, I identify the common ground that enables a potential cross-fertilisation between these strands and take a stand against the different theories of post-hegemony, whose common denominator is the radical rejection of Gramsci's legacy. Peter Thomas, whose seminal book *The Gramscian Moment* has shaped contemporary understandings of Gramsci, critically notes these theories:

> The proposal to go beyond hegemony effectively results in the rediscovery of precisely those political problems to which the emergence of hegemony in the Marxist tradition—as concept and political practice—was designed as a strategic response.
>
> (Thomas, 2020: 3)

Richard Day's work (2005) provides an illustrative example of these theories. The provocative title of his book —*Gramsci Is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*— summarises his main argument. Importantly, Day takes much of his analytical framework from Agamben, with whom he shares the abandonment of class struggle analysis and any kind of hegemonic project in the name of a non-hegemonic orientation. Day's criticism targets both the revolutionary struggle, which seeks totalising effects across all aspects of the existing social order by taking state power, and the politics of reform, which seek global change on selected axes by reforming state power (Day, 2005: 45). Instead, Day rejects a 'politics of demand' altogether, and points to movements/networks/tactics that do not seek totalising effects on any axis (Ibid: 15).

Daniel Bensaïd (2007) draws a parallel between Day's work and that of John Holloway and Antonio Negri, calling them 'neo-libertarian utopias' in which the world can be changed without taking power or by making do with counter-powers. This is indicative of his broader criticism of these theories:

> The withdrawal from politics found expression in what could be called a 'social illusion', by analogy with the 'political illusion' of those criticised by the young Marx for thinking 'political' emancipation being fully realised through the achievement of civil rights as the last word in 'human emancipation'. There was a symmetrical illusion about the self-sufficiency of social movements reflected to a degree in the experiences after Seattle (1999) and the first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre (2001).
>
> (Bensaid: 2007)

Bensaïd's critique is to the point, even if there are important differences between the works of the authors he cites as representing neo-libertarian utopias. Indicative of these differences is the fact that Day is critical of Hardt and Negri, presenting their concept of multitude as characteristic example of what he identifies as 'the problem with the class-centric nature of much autonomist theory' (Day, 2005: 151-152, 166). While analysing the concept of the multitude is not my intention in this thesis, I contend that Hardt and Negri's position on Gramsci is good ground for a cross-fertilisation of ideas between Marxism and autonomist Marxism. As they note in *Commonwealth*:

> The making of the multitude and the composition and consolidation of its capacities for democratic decision making in revolutionary institutions is exactly the kind of production of subjectivity that Gramsci sees as necessary for an active rather than passive revolution. Such a return to the Leninist Gramsci on the biopolitical terrain allows us to bring together the seemingly divergent strands of his thought. We are not faced with an alternative—either insurrection or institutional struggle, either passive or active revolution. Instead revolution must simultaneously be both insurrection and institution, structural and superstructural transformation. This is the path of the 'becoming-Prince' of the multitude.
>
> (Hardt and Negri, 2009: 367)

Focusing more directly on the topic of migration, firstly, I situate this thesis within a growing literature that responds to post-hegemonic approaches and skilfully uses Gramsci's concepts to explore immigrant activism. An example is the volume *Solidarity without Borders*, edited by Oscar Garcia Agustin and Martin Bak Jørgensen (2016: 6). It brings together Gramscian perspectives on migration

and civil society alliances comprising immigrant and non-immigrant actors with the aim of challenging the hegemonic order. From this perspective, the researchers argue that the category of the migrant and the analysis of migrants as political subjects are characterised by heterogeneity. Thus, they conceptualise migrant subjects from four angles: labour mobility, migration (both economic and political), colonialism and transnational relations (Ibid).

As opposed to post-hegemonic theories, Agustin and Jørgensen point out that Gramsci's analysis of alliances and solidarities is very much alive in the dynamics of subaltern political activism and the generative character of political struggle (Agustín and Jørgensen, 2016: 7; Featherstone, 2013). They argue that contributions like that of Richard Day, who claims that 'Gramsci is dead' do not capture the demands of the latest movements (Ibid). By contrast, they draw from Hardt and Negri (2004), who characterise immigrants as 'a special category within the multitude that embodies revolutionary potential' (Agustin and Jørgensen, 2016: 228). Thus, Agustin and Jørgensen point to a constructive dialogue with the Autonomy of Migration (AoM) perspective, which is crucial for this thesis.

In recent years, AoM and the related 'militant research practice' highlighted the subjective dimension of migration and brought together scholars and activists crtitically rethinking the academic practices of 'migration studies' and counteracting the subsequent de-politicisation of migration (Garelli and Tazzioli, 2013: 246). As Garelli and Tazzioli (2013: 246) note, the use of the term 'militant', with its partisan and organisational connotations, seems to best express a political understanding of knowledge as a 'political epistemology'. This method builds on a long tradition of workers' direct engagement with 'making certain knowledges part of, and tools for, social and political struggle'. AoM is more specifically related to the idea of collaborative research (*conricerca*/co-research) as it has been developed in the autonomist tradition in Italy in the 1960s and 1970s (Ibid). In their seminal work *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor,* Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson explain that the border is not so much a research object as an epistemological viewpoint:

> [This viewpoint] allows an acute critical analysis not only of how relations of domination, dispossession, and exploitation are being redefined presently but also of the struggles that take shape around these changing relations. The border can be a method precisely insofar as it is conceived of as a site of struggle. (…) This focus on struggles also ensures the punctuality of border as method. It guides us not only in the selection of the relevant empirical settings for our investigations but also in the very construction of the 'objects' to be studied.
>
> (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013: 18)

The broader work of Mezzadra and Neilson draws from Gramsci and highlights the possibilities of cross-fertilisation between Marxism and autonomist Marxism.[8] At the same time, other autonomist scholars have often adopted post-hegemonic approaches that have serious methodological implications. A distinctive aspect of these post-hegemonic influences is the debate on citizenship struggles.

At this point, I bring into the discussion contributions from Critical Citizenship Studies (CCS), since, working from this perspective, several scholars shed light on the shortcomings of certain positions widespread within the autonomist milieu. Peter Nyers (2015: 25) argues that CCS's formulations around 'acts of citizenship' have important resonance with the autonomists' view regarding the primacy of the power of movement over the power of controls. He explains that AoM arose as an antidote to counter some of the pessimism for thinking about the political agency of abject migrants that has come from working with the conceptual tools and frames of Giorgio Agamben (Nyers, 2015: 26). At the same time, Nyers offers a critical assessment of AoM's dismissal of citizenship as an exclusionary concept, arguing that the autonomist perspective would benefit from a more nuanced approach (Ibid: 23). As he points out, most autonomists view citizenship only as another manifestation of border control and exclusion. In contrast, CCS addresses the political paradoxes of citizenship as simultaneously a means of governance and exclusionary rule, and also as an important identity through which progressive struggles are enacted and performed (Nyers, 2015: 27, 34). Therefore, CCS points

[8] Mezzadra and Neilson have also contributed to the intellectual exchanges on the idea of communism after 2010. In that respect, particularly interesting is their commentary on the work of Jodi Dean and Bruno Bosteels (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2014).

out that people constitute themselves as political subjects and citizens 'prior to being legally or discursively recognised as such by state authorities' (Nyers, 2015: 25).

Engin Isin, who has introduced the concept of 'acts of citizenship', highlights the need for a new vocabulary of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen, 2008; Isin, 2009: 368). Indicative of this new vocabulary is the figure of the 'activist citizen', which Isin, among others, has applied to his analysis of immigrant activism, such as the *sans-papiers* movement in France. In this context, *acts of citizenship* are those acts through which citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens emerge not as actors already defined but as ways of being with others (Isin, 2009: 382). The figure of the 'activist citizen' to which he refers is related to the new 'sites', 'scales' and 'acts' through which actors transform themselves (and others) from subjects into citizens as claimants of rights. As he explains:

> The rights (civil, political, social, sexual, ecological, cultural), sites (bodies, courts, streets, media, networks, borders), scales (urban, regional, national, transnational, international) and acts (voting, volunteering, blogging, protesting, resisting and organizing) through which subjects enact themselves (and others) as citizens need to be interpreted anew.
>
> (Isin, 2009: 368)

In a similar vein, Anne McNevin (2011: 4-5) interpetes irregular migrants' acts of contestation as a new frontier of the political and argues that irregular migrants' growing political activism generates new claims to citizenship that deploy alternative political geographies. McNevin (2013: 198, 185) emphasises citizenship's dynamic and performative dimensions rather than its static formalistic ones and proposes *ambivalence* as the basis for an alternative theorization that is capable of holding together the tensions that are characteristic of irregular migrants' struggles. As she notes:

> Such an approach acknowledges the transformative potential of claims based in human rights, even though such claims may paradoxically affirm a human rights regime that has proved less than emancipatory for certain groups of people, and that is, in important ways, connected to institutionalised modes of violence.
>
> (McNevin, 2013: 185)

Based on the above approach, McNevin takes a clear position critical of both Agamben and certain figures amongst the AoM scholars, mentioning, among others, Hardt and Negri (2009), as well as Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos (2008). As she explains, while Agamben and the AoM scholars may differ in terms of the political vocabulary they offer to irregular migrant struggle, there are some prior assumptions that are shared by the two approaches, at least in their crudest forms (McNevin, 2013: 193). As she adds, at the heart of both approaches are ontological assumptions that orient understanding of human potential towards 'lack' in the case of Agamben and 'abundance' in the case of AoM scholars (McNevin, 2013: 193). McNevin points out that AoM scholars accord to migrants in general, and irregular migrants in particular, a subversive quality and attribute an ambition that is not necessarily there. As a result, AoM scholars conflate what may be their own strategic agenda for a politics of migration with an actual equivalence of struggles (Ibid: 194).

McNevin concludes that both Agamben and AoM scholars rely on a reductive reading of power in order to dismiss struggles based in claims to citizenship and human rights as always already co-opted (McNevin, 2013: 185, 195). By contrast, she argues that the transformative dimension of claims on the basis of human rights is better discerned via a dialogical relationship between theory production and concrete migrant struggles – an approach that goes hand in hand with an emphasis on the act of making claims and the broader social environment that contextualises the act (McNevin, 2013: 197). Despite her criticism of certain autonomist positions, McNevin acknowleges that other scholars associated with AoM literature offer more subtle approaches that avoid binary reductions and insist on the constitutive relation between migration and control. More precisely, she refers to the work of Mezzadra noting that his emphasis on ambivalence allows him to maintain a more reflexive position on the inside–outside binaries (McNevin, 2013: 195). As a result, McNevin also leaves space for a constructive dialogue between CCS and AoM, drawing a demarcation line between subtle and crude forms of AoM approaches.

If the anti-political stance of crude forms of autonomist approaches are closely linked to post-hegemony and the trap of 'legal nihilism', the question is if claims on the basis of human rights in general, and citizenship struggles in particular, are doomed to lead to the trap 'legal liberalism' and what Bensaid (2007) referred to as the 'political illusion'. In what follows, I build on a radical view of human rights and draw on classic and more recent developments in the field with the aim to break the vicious circle of 'legal nihilism' and 'legal liberalism' and identify Marxist contributions towards a third option.

1.5 The Legal Terrain as a Field of Struggle for Immigrant Rights

Since immigrants' engagement with legal struggles occupies a central role in the issues that arose during my research, I had to subject certain frameworks to close scrutiny with the aim of examining different types of responses to international law breaches and, subsequently, different types of litigation. To this end, my study is informed by a wide interdisciplinary literature that is critical of 'legal liberalism'. Framing migration issues in terms of 'legal liberalism' avoids addressing the structural inequalities and is thus accompanied by the assumption that in order to address the violation of immigrant rights, it is sufficient to take legal action and ask for the restoration of the 'rule of law'. Marx (1887) summarised his opposition to liberal understandings based on the neutrality of law with his famous phrase in the first volume of *Capital*: 'between equal rights, force decides'. In the Marxist theory, it is argued that the rights of the abstract universal man promote the interests of the selfish and possessive individual of capitalism. In dialogue with these classic formulations, Costas Douzinas (2000) argues that the 'man' of human rights is literally a Western white middle-class man who, under the claims of non-discrimination and abstract equality, has stamped his image on law and human rights and has become the measure of all things and people (Douzinas, 2000: 165). Further, Douzinas offers a critical assessment of the official thinking and action on human rights the recent decades:

> Official thinking and action on human rights has been entrusted in the hands of triumphalist column writers, bored diplomats and rich international lawyers in New York and Geneva, people whose experience of human rights violations is confined to being served a bad bottle of wine. In the process, human rights have been turned from a discourse of rebellion and dissent into that of state legitimacy.
>
> (Douzinas, 2000: 7)

Concerning the latter function of human rights, Perugini and Gordon (2015) offer an illuminating view of how human rights can also be deployed to subjugate the weak and reinforce their domination by others.[9] What about human rights as a discourse of rebellion? This is a thorny issue within the Marxist tradition. For example, China Miéville (2004) argues that the form of international law —and juridical forms in general— pose limits on any kind of progressive content, which should be seriously taken into account. In his work *Between Equal Rights. A Marxist Theory of International Law*, Miéville develops a commodity-form approach inspired by the soviet legal theorist Evgeny Pashukanis and a materialist account of the connection between law and imperialism. His main conclusion is that the attempt to replace war and inequality with law 'is not merely utopian—it is precisely self-defeating' (Miéville, 2004: 319). As he remarks: 'The chaotic and bloody world around us *is the rule of law*.'

Miéville sees legal battles as a means of mobilising extra-legal public opinion and argues that 'if a victory is claimed, then, it is likely to be "in the court of public opinion", outside the law' (2004: 304). While Miéville's formulation is a major contribution to a Marxist theory of international law, a central argument in this thesis is that under certain circumstances, a legal battle can offer more than valuable arguments for the 'court of public opinion'. For that reason, I build on the work of Robert Knox, who makes a similar argument and highlights that Miéville 'severely underestimates the degree to which progressive forces might be able to assert their claims in international law' (Knox, 2009: 418).

[9] They use Israel/Palestine as their main case study and describe, to give an example, the establishment of settler NGOs that appropriate human rights to dispossess indigenous Palestinians and military think tanks that rationalize lethal violence by invoking rights discourse (Perugini and Gordon, 2015).

Like Miéville, Knox also seriously considers the limits of the legal form and builds on the work of Pashukanis. At the same time, he offers a more suitable framework for the purposes of this thesis, since he argues that the opposition 'is not between "using the law" (as a liberal) or "abandoning it" (as a nihilist)'. Rather, he continues, the question is on what terms it is possible to use the law without fatally undermining longer term, structural considerations (Knox, 2010: 215). In that respect, Knox develops certain ideas that proved useful and influential for this study. First, he draws attention to the fact that the language and form of human rights law tends towards abstraction and individualisation, and in turn depoliticises social conflicts (Knox, 2019: 36). Therefore, Knox (2017) notes, in a prescriptive mode, that it is of the utmost importance that the use of law 'is consciously subordinated to a political project'.

This proposal is the outcome of Knox's dialectical synthesis of a wide variety of concepts in the Marxist tradition, specifically drawing on the work of Gramsci and Lukács, both of whom have heavily influenced my personal intellectual and political development. I now present some of the main assumptions behind Knox's position that were also central to this study. First, Knox warns about the confusion between tactics and strategy. His formulations resonated strongly when I critically examined 'strategic litigation' for immigrant rights as a specific kind of litigation and tried to redefine what is explicitly 'strategic' about it. Knox explains that strategy concerns finding methods to achieve long-term, systemic aims, whereas tactics concern finding methods to achieve short-term, conjunctural aims (Knox, 2010: 200). Subsequently, he lists specific problems related to the confusion in the terminology:

> The first is that an intervention that is successful in tactical terms may nonetheless be problematic in strategic terms. The second is that in the absence of an overarching strategic vision, there are no criteria for deciding when one should use the language of liberal legalism and when one should not. The third and final problem is that these two facts together mean that rather than a 'strategic' adoption of liberal legalism, the vision so outlined is in fact a wholesale *capitulation to* it.
>
> (Knox, 2010: 208)

Instead, Knox proposes framing tactics in terms of strategy (Ibid: 220). He develops the idea of 'principled opportunism' as a specifically legal conception of the relationship between strategy and tactics and a method of intervening in conjunctural legal debates without losing sight of the strategic goal (Ibid: 228). In this context, law is consciously used as a mere tool to be discarded when it is not useful (Ibid: 221). Knox (2011) elaborates further on these issues in an interesting debate with Bill Bowring (2011) on the meanings of 'radical lawyering'. Bowring provides a view of 'radical lawyering', citing organisations such as the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) and progressive legal practice, such as representing defendants accused of public order offences or providing monitors for anti-fascist demonstrations (Bowring, 2011: 9). Without underestimating this practice, Knox adds some elements he identifies as constitutive in terms of 'radical lawyering':

> As such, the more immediate 'tactical' issues of legal struggle are *not* determined by the logic of the legal field, but rather through collective political deliberation, framed by theoretical, strategic and political perspectives. This *may* result in a decision to adopt legalistic tactics (because winning an immediate victory may be the overriding concern), or it may not, but that decision is governed by collective political decision-making. It is in this way that 'theory' and 'practice' are brought together.
>
> (Knox, 2011: 44)

One example Knox provides as exemplifying his view of radical lawyering is the Siamese-born French lawyer, writer, and political activist Jacques Vergès, who practised and theorised what he identified as 'strategies of rupture' (Vergès, 1968). As Knox explains, this ruptural strategy uses the spectacle and publicity of law to directly undermine the law by launching a political attack on the existing order (Knox, 2010: 225). In addition, he provides some critical insights into Vergès' formulation:

> Vergès essentially comes very close to collapsing strategy and tactics here, misunderstanding that a collusory trial might itself further the agenda of overthrowing capitalism (and law) but in a more mediated sense. Equally, he does not recognise that an adherence 'inside' the trial to the existing order, could be matched by defiance 'outside' of it.
>
> (Knox, 2010: 226)

In line with his idea of 'principled opportunism', Knox suggests there is a continuum between the more defensive 'collusory' aspects and the more offensive 'ruptural' aspects of legal struggle. Calculating which of these aspects to use is a practical political decision (Ibid: 227). Finally, Knox (2019) offers useful insights into the role of the ECHR, which resonated well with my examination of claims against Greece brought to the Court on behalf of immigrants whom I interviewed for the purposes of this research. This is the main idea I adopted and tried to apply in the analysis and presentation of my research findings on specific legal cases: 'The overarching objective of a Marxist approach to a case is to set it within its material context, and understand how the social relations of capitalism shape the arguments at play' (Knox, 2019: 23).

In a similar vein, Behrman acknowledges the importance of the struggle by refugees, lawyers and campaigners to demand legal rights (not to be detained, not to be deported, to work, to access housing, etc.), but posits an interesting distinction:

> Making demands of law is not the same thing as demanding recognition by law. For the refugee, seeking the latter entails placing herself in a reciprocal relationship with a structural form that has systematically stripped her of humanity.
>
> (Behrman, 2014: 21)

Building on Pashukanis, as Miéville and Knox also do, Behrman argues that the law cannot protect the refugee from the effects of capitalism and sovereign state because it is a function of these socio-economic structures. The problem for the refugee, as Behrman adds, is not too little, but too much law, since the apparent contradiction between more legal rights and yet a more debased existence is one immanent to legal subjectivity. The form of the legal subject cannot but do violence to the refugee (Behrman, 2014: 2). To sum up, while this thesis argues that legal struggles matter, at the same time it builds on Behrman's argument that for refugees, it is not legal subjectivity that needs reclaiming, but political subjectivity (Ibid: 21).

1.6 The Power of Imagination: Towards a Collaborative Movement Strategising Research

If there is a truly proletarian concept, then this is the word 'We'.

(Lunacharsky, 1967)

Having set the scene, I now propose a collaborative strategising research and explains its distinctive features. First, I engage in a critical dialogue with the 'militant research practice' related to autonomist traditions and explore recent developments in the field. By working towards a political epistemology of migration, militant investigation, related to AoM, specifically attempts to destabilise the binaries of the researcher and researched. Instead, it focuses on identifying or creating spaces of engagement and proximity, sites of shared struggle and precarity (De Genova, Mezzadra and Pickles, 2015). As Garelli and Tazzioli add:

> In the field of migration, a wide range of militant investigation styles has originated, ranging from border ethnographies, to counterinformation and counter-narratives networks, to counter-mapping projects, to forensic oceanography, to chronological accounts of the evolutions of migrant struggles and control mechanisms.
>
> (Garelli and Tazzioli, 2013: 246)

The researchers note that with origins in militant research in the factories in Italy in the 1960s and 1970s, this approach then 'travelled' to other geographic and socio-political situations, connecting with their traditions of research and militancy —e.g. the Argentinian Colectivo Situaciones and the Spanish collective Precarias a la Deriva (Garelli and Tazzioli, 2013: 246). In what follows, I engage in a closer examination of the Colectivo Situaciones, with a focus on the methodological implications of post-hegemonic approaches. My main argument is that while there is a lot to learn from militant research related to autonomist traditions, at the same time certain groups adopt a restrictive and exclusionary conception of the researcher militant based on a crude caricature of the figure of the political militant. In this regard, the case of Colectivo Situaciones is illustrative. This is a collective of militant researchers based in Buenos Aires, that has participated in numerous grassroots co-research activities

with unemployed workers, peasant movements, neighbourhood assemblies and alternative education experiments. The collective's work is a source of inspiration for several projects around the world and makes a significant contribution to militant research, including by organising workshops and study groups and by co-producing books that have been a reference point for activists and scholars.

In his introduction to the English translation of Colectivo Situaciones' work on the 2001 uprising in Argentina, Michael Hardt writes: 'If the insurrection in Argentina that began in December 2001 was our Paris Commune, then Colectivo Situaciones fits well in the position of Karl Marx' (Hardt in Colectivo Situaciones, 2011: 15). Engaging with this book is far beyond the scope of this thesis. However, without underestimating the importance of the study, I have serious doubt that any collective or individual writer could resonate with Marx and the Marxist tradition while radically rejecting concepts such as hegemony, conjuncture, representation and political strategy, as Colectivo Situaciones does building on post-hegemonic approaches. In what follows, I narrow down this critique, examining how this collective defines the role of the militant researcher and the use of interviews as research methods. With due respect for its collective work, and while acknowledging the limits of my own positionality in terms of academic research, I present some of Colectivo Situaciones' notes on the method of militant research and then outline an alternative framework, which leads at the end of this section to a new synthesis identified as a *co-strategising research*.

To take the critique of Colectivo Situaciones (2003) a step further, it is wise to turn to their influential text 'On the Researcher-Militant' (Colectivo Situaciones, 2003). According to the Argentinian collective, militant research should be an authentic anti-pedagogy that abandons the goal to politicise and intellectualise social practices. Therefore, the militant researcher's main task should be to remain faithful to their 'not knowing', which means that such researchers should work neither from their own set of knowledges about the world, nor from their idea of how things ought to be. Militant research, as the collective continues, does not look for a model of experience and does not compare real experience with an ideal model. Rather, it affirms itself against the existence of such ideals. On these grounds,

Colectivo Situaciones declares that the researcher-militant is distinct from and oppose to both the academic researcher and the political militant:

> Political militancy is also a practice with an object. As such, it has remained tied to a mode of instrumentality: one that connects itself to other experiences of a subjectivity always already constituted, with prior knowledges—of *strategy*—equipped with universally valid statements which are purely ideological. Its form of being with others is *utilitarian*: there is never *affinity*, always 'agreement'. There is never *encounter*, always 'tactics'. (…) From this point of view, political militancy, including militants from the Left, is as external, judgmental and objectualizing as university research.
>
> (Colectivo Situaciones, 2003)

I argue that Colectivo Situaciones severely underestimates the historical traditions of creatively engaging political militants in militant investigations. The crude caricature of the figure of the political militant in their analysis is related to the defeat of the Left in the 1990s, when the collective was critically reflecting on militant experiences and developed its main ideas on militant research. Further, I claim that Colectivo Situaciones' 'authentic anti-pedagogy' leads to a subjectivist trap and a theorisation of the interviewer, who is restricted to a role not much different to that of an audio recorder. As a result, while the collective's own practice is in many different ways innovative, their insistence on post-hegemony leads to assumptions which are far behind the methodological concerns of the Italian workerist co-research of the 1960s. [10]

Unlike the Colectivo Situaciones' restrictive and exclusionary theoretical formulations on the researcher-militant, Marcello Hoffman argues that militant investigations are not limited to any particular political tradition of the Left or anarchist movement. In his work *Militant Acts: The Role of Investigation in Radical Political Struggles*, Hoffman (2019) discusses many examples of militant

[10] Steve Wright (2002) provides an illuminating view of the Italian workerist co-research of the 1960s. In that respect, the discussion in the political journal *Quaderni Rossi* is revealing. At the centre of the discussion is a) the use of sociological tools in workers' inquiries and, specifically, oral histories, b) the danger of the descent into pure empiricism as a result of recounting only a limited number of individual testimonies and c) the extent to which the registration of working-class behaviours and perceptions is fostering self-activity (Wright, 2002: 24, 25).

investigations during the 19th and 20th century related, among others, to Marx, Lenin, Mao, US Marxist humanists, French Maoists and Italian workerists.[11] Further, he emphasises that the 'we' generated by militant investigations can bear many names, both inside and outside party form (Ibid: 18). In my view, the following passage summarises the legacy of multiple traditions of militant investigations:

> The investigation is not an activity between two ready-made subjects who simply exchange questions and answers (or information more generally) with no further consequences. It is an act that harbors the potential to *produce* a collective political subject, a new 'we' among the various participants in the investigations, not to mention many others. (…) The history of militant investigations is nothing less than the history of the practice of formulating, inhabiting, and channeling questions in new social directions to produce new forms of collective political subjectivity.
>
> (Hoffman, 2019: 16, 142)

Further, Hoffman notes the decline of militant research after the 1970s and provides a view of the historical background, quoting Andrea Cavazzini's assessment of the decline as a result of political defeat:

> The working class ceased to exist as an antagonistic force to the existing economic and political system; it ceased, above all, to represent the possibility of an alternative organization of society (…) The demands of philosophical or political critique no longer had a structural link with active historical forces; and the workers once again became the passive objects of sociology and economics, even of a morbid or hypocritical pity directed at the consequences of deindustrialization and liberalization.
>
> (Cavazzini in Hoffman, 2019: 13)

In a similar vein, Peter Hallward (2002) makes a point that is particularly relevant to this research. He explains how the so-called 'immigrant question' relates to the consequences of 'the swing in global political economy over the 1980s against organised labour and popular movements generally'. Hallward adds that this coincides with the invention of the terms 'immigrant', 'foreigner', 'étranger', 'clandestin' and so on, which Hallward identifies as 'pseudo-political labels'. On these grounds,

[11] Hoffman (2019: 136-137) refers to the contribution of Colectivo Situaciones and presents several additional recent examples of militant investigations, such as Jamie Woodcock's (2016) workers' inquiry at a call centre in the UK, where he worked undercover to gather insights into the everyday experiences of call centre workers.

Hallward argues that ‘without a strong figure of the worker there can be no effective response to the so-called “immigrant question”’. In what follows, I build on this argument drawing on feminists and social movement theorists.

Methodologically speaking, Mezzadra is right to point out that through their specific emphasis on the subjectivity of the migrant women, feminist studies contest precisely the implicit assumptions of mainstream research on migratory processes, according to which the only migrant of any importance is the man, and the woman is considered only in her position inside the family (Mezzadra, 2004: 270). First, I draw on Social Reproduction Theory (SRT), which grew out of historical materialist analyses of gender relations and, according to David McNally (2017: 94), ‘offers the most promising perspective for those interested in a historical materialist theory of multiple oppressions within capitalist society’. As Ferguson and McNally explain:

> We believe that a Marxist social reproduction approach can *theorize* migrant labor in ways that more fully grasp its role in late capitalism and the multi-dimensionality of the class formations involved, particularly their gendered and racialized dimensions.
>
> (Ferguson and McNally 2015b)

In light of SRT, Hallward’s argument that a strong figure of the worker is the most effective response to the so-called ‘immigrant question’ should be accompanied by an understanding of this figure’s specific condition in terms of race and gender, which, in line with SRT, are considered inherent in class formations (McNally, 2013: 411). As Colin Barker (2017) notes in his reflections on SRT: ‘the class struggle is not simply fought between already-formed entities, but is the very means through which popular classes “make themselves” to become, or not become, “for themselves”’. Further, Ferguson and McNally shed light on several ‘hidden’ aspects of the situation of the immigrant worker, whom they describe as ‘the ideal precarious labourer of the neoliberal era’ (Ferguson and McNally, 2015a). Tithi Bhattacharya summarises two main aspects of SRT that particularly influenced this study:

> First, that it [SRT] is a methodology to explore labor and labor power under capitalism and is best suited to offer a rich and variegated map of capital as a social relation; further, that this is a methodology that privileges process, or, to use Lukács' words, we believe that the 'developing tendencies of history constitute a higher reality than the empirical "facts"'.
>
> (Bhattacharya, 2017: 4-5; Lukács, 1971: 181)

Elaborating on 'the marriages and divorces of Marxism and Feminism', Cinzia Arruzza (2013: 125) notes that analysis of the sexual division of labour, of the role of reproduction for capitalism, and the way patriarchal ideology is interwoven with the dynamics of capitalist accumulation, continues to not be fully integrated either in Marxist theory or in the actions of organizations of the political left and social movements. At this point, I bring into the discussion the idea of intersectionality and argue that there is fertile ground for fruitful dialogues between Marxist feminisms and intersectionality theory.

As Leah Bassel and Akwugo Emejulu explain, the idea of intersectionality 'refers to the study of the simultaneous and interacting effects of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and national origin as categories of difference' (Bassel and Emejulu 2010: 518). While the term was first presented by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) in legal theory, there is general agreement that black feminist contributions of the 1970's and 1980's, such as the work of Angela Davis (1983), Audre Lorde (2007) and Hill Collins (1986), have played a major role in the following decades, influencing the uses of intersectionality as an analytical tool to explore different forms of activism. In their recent work, Emejulu and Sobande define Black feminism 'as both a theory and a politics of affirmation and liberation' and 'as a praxis that identifies women racialised as Black as knowing agents for social change' (2019: 3).

A concern that has been emphatically raised by thinkers working from this perspective is related to narrow understandings of solidarity within the movements. As Emejulu (2018: 271) puts it referring to the history of feminist movements, 'a "call to sisterhood" is usually made by and for white, middle-class women'. Exploring recent forms of activism, she is critical of protest and other events, where 'all-white organisers presume to speak on behalf of all women, Black, Latina and migrant women'

(Emejulu, 2018: 270). Emejulu concludes that feminists must confront the exclusionary politics which have so often been embedded in their activism and adds that feminist solidarity between women cannot be presumed - it must be fought for and made real through individual and collective action (Ibid: 272).

Intersectionality theory has been critical of economistic currents within Marxism 'for considering race and racism as "secondary," or "derivative" forms of oppression with respect to class exploitation' and as Farris (2015) adds, 'has had the salutary effect of pushing Marxist feminists to interrogate more deeply assumptions and theoretical baggage inherited from "economistic" readings of class' (Ibid).

McNally (2017: 94, 111) acknowledges that Marxist-inspired SRT draws upon critical insights about multiple forms of oppression that intersectionality theory has advanced. On the other hand, he argues that SRT is being renovated in part as a response to critical challenges from intersectionality and anti-racism. From a Marxist-Femist perspective, it is problematic that most accounts of intersectionality adopt the idea that there are independently constituted relations of oppression that, in some circumstances, crisscross each other —that is what McNally identifies as 'the ontological atomism inherent in the founding formulations of intersectionality theory' (McNally, 2017: 96). In other words, as Farris (2015) notes, many scholars of intersectionality have assumed the existence of different systems, or axes of oppression but without questioning the configuration, functioning, historical dimensions and the very nature and existence of these systems themselves. Ferguson and McNally (2015b) point out that one reason for these theoretical flaws has to do with intersectionality feminism's inadequate theorization of the social totality, the overall processes or dynamic in and through which discrete social relations intersect.

Marxist scholars, on the other hand, posit a *capitalist* totality and follow the internal relations approach that understands class, gender, race and sexuality as mutually co-constitutive at their most foundational levels (Ferguson and McNally 2015b; Bannerji, 1995). While the theoretical dialogue between Marxist feminisms and intersectionality theory is still open, it is important to note that many scholars of

intersectionality and Marxist feminism share a common transnational, grassroots focus, and a commitment to anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist solidarity politics (Emejulu, 2018: 272). As Emejulu puts it:

> To struggle for a new world necessitates a transformation in thinking and action that subverts existing power relations linked to race, class, sexuality, disability, and legal status. It requires thinking expansively about alternatives to capitalism.
>
> (Emejulu, 2018: 272)

Along these lines, the present study benefitted from intersectionality theory in order to explore intersectional social justice claims and avoid exclusionary politics within the movements based on narrow understandings of solidarity (Bassel and Emejulu, 2017). Further, it benefitted from SRT in order to trace the patterns of gender and racialization that are constitutive of working-class formation from the start and illuminate the ways in which movements for gender and racial justice are central features of class struggle (Ferguson and McNally, 2015a).

In their introduction to the collective volume *Marxism and Social Movements*, Barker *et al.* (2013: 28-29) refer to the struggles of women and immigrants, workers excluded from formal bargaining rights under law, and workers in contingent jobs and argue that their activity represents a global process which they describe as 'the ongoing practical recomposition of the working class' (Ibid). As Barker *et al.* note, women and immigrants have been 'among those most energetically organising against their bosses, setting up new mutual aid structures, and addressing "intersectional" or "co-constitutive" oppressions of race and gender both inside or outside of formal trade union structures or alliances'.

More precisely, this thesis builds on certain formulations by Colin Barker, Laurence Cox and John Krinsky around *movement strategising*. Expanding on the distinction between 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectuals, Barker and Cox distinguish forms of intellectual practice that have an organic connection to social movements and collective action from those that do not (Barker and Cox, 2002:

1; Cox, 2015: 35). In the former case, the intellectual practice includes what they identify as 'the strategic and tactical proposal':

> This is a complex proposition which links together a reading of the nature of the present situation (including its relevant history) with an action plan (including a risk-assessment etc.) for the movement in the immediate future. It speaks to a 'we' with which the movement intellectual claims an immediate identification. That 'we' may be a formally defined 'movement' or 'party', or may be framed as 'ordinary people', 'workers', 'the Catholic community', 'Blacks' etc. Such propositions take a typical form: *Given the overall situation, and our purposes and resources within it, this is how we should act.*
>
> (Barker and Cox, 2002: 4)

Unlike Colectivo Situaciones, Cox notes that the researchers' own standpoint and knowledge is part of the dialogue and describes this as a joint process of 'learning from each other's struggles' (Cox, 1998; 2015: 42). This learning process aims to achieve 'expansive learning', as Barker (2014: 1) defines it, 'a collective process of identifying current problems and seeking previously unimagined ways of developing new forms of collaborative practice'. Barker adds that sometimes this process takes place 'in conditions where the activists are placed under considerable pressure from opponents who have their own strategies, their own objects, their own instruments'. This is what Barker identifies as 'events' and 'turning points' wherein 'expansive learning is often required *under fire*' (Ibid: 10).[12]

Drawing on the work of soviet psychologist Lev Vygotski and the growing literature on Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), Barker and Krinsky (2009: 220) relate expansive learning to movement strategising. As they explain, movement strategising is necessarily a learning process, by which they mean 'a dialogical exploration of dilemmas and a reflexive process that implicates the identity, the social relations and the purposes of those engaged in it' (Ibid: 220). In their formulation, 'expansive learning' is directly related to 'strategic capacity'. The latter is a concept introduced by

[12] In his theorisation of processes, Lukács (2000) stresses that processes concatenate into what he terms 'moments of decision' ('Augenblick') (Barker and Cox, 2002: 4). Della Porta (2020) has contributed to this discussion bridging debates on critical junctures with social movement studies and suggesting a 'momentous approach to social movements'.

Marshall Ganz (2010a) in his illuminating study of the United Farm Workers' achievements in California during the 1960s.[13] For Ganz, 'strategy is how we turn what we have into what we need to get what we want':

> An organization's strategic capacity, I argue further, is a function of who its leaders are —their identities, networks, and tactical experiences— and how they structure their interactions with each other and their environment with respect to resource flows, accountability, and deliberation.
>
> (Ganz, 2010a: 8)

Key factors determining differences in strategic capacity are good knowledge of the field, heuristic practices, motivation and the capacity to see things through the eyes of the actors in the field. In the particular case Ganz (2010a: 14) examines, the latter had to do with the capacity of the United Farm Workers' leadership team 'to see things through the eyes of farm workers, religious leaders, political activists, and so on'. In my view, the following passage best illustrates the stakes of strategic capacity and explains the aforementioned key factors:

> A deep desire for change must be coupled with the capacity to make change. Structures must be created that create the space within which growth, creativity, and action can flourish, without slipping into the chaos of structurelessness, and leaders must be recruited, trained, and developed on a scale required to build the relationships, sustain the motivation, do the strategizing, and carry out the action required to achieve success.
>
> (Ganz, 2010b: 530)

Before concluding this section, I draw attention to specific contributions that I placed in dialogue with Ganz and that illustrate how I tried to apply the concept of 'strategic capacity' to examining the wide range of organisations included in this study. First, I build on Jane F. McAlevey's point in her productive dialogue with Ganz about who should participate in making strategy:

> I expand who should be in the strategy war room from people with recognizable decision-making authority or a position or title —such as lead organizer, vice president, researcher,

[13] In his work, Ganz highlights the surprisingly effective tactics of these farmworkers, who turned the strike into a civil rights struggle, engaged in civil disobedience, mobilised support from churches and students, boycotted growers and eventually triumphed over them (Ganz, 2010a: 253).

> director, steward, and executive board member— to specific individuals who have no titles but who are the organic leaders on whom the masses rely: nurse, teacher, anesthesia tech, school bus driver, congregant, and voter. I urge a deeper dive into the specific backgrounds, networks, and salient knowledge of the masses involved, rather than only those of the leadership team— the rank and file matter just as much to outcomes, if not more, than the more formal leaders.
>
> Jane F. McAlevey (2016: 20)

Likewise, Barker *et al.* note that 'thinking and making sense, the practical generalization is quite as much a part of the experience of the poor or of workers as it is of academics' (Barker *et al.*, 2013: 15). However, everyone can theoretically participate in making strategy, when in reality not everyone does. Barker and Krinsky identify the requirements of this participation, writing about the intellectual activity that particularly constitutes strategising: prospectively modelling ways of coordinating activity aimed at achieving a specific end in different settings and situations (Barker and Krinsky, 2009: 219).

This brings us to Ganz's formulations on the creation of structures, which I place in dialogue with Alan Sears' concept of 'infrastructure of dissent,' which he defines as 'the means through which activists develop political communities capable of learning, communicating and mobilizing together' (Sears, 2014: 2). Collective memory, collective dreams and collective learning are essential elements of such an infrastructure, which consists of more formal and organisational structures, as well as informal community, workplace, and leisure spaces. Sears notes that infrastructures of dissent 'cannot be built once and for all time but must be rebuilt and renewed' (Ibid: 9).

Finally, I claim that the soviet philosopher Evald Ilyenkov (2007: 81-82) offers an excellent answer to the difficult question of how to build capacity to see things through the eyes of others. Ilyenkov suggests developing the power of imagination, understood not as the ability to think up what does not exist but as the ability (or skill) to see what does exist, what lies before one's eyes.[14] He emphasises that this is not an innate skill, but one acquired through different levels of development. Leaving no

[14] For a more recent analysis on the theme of imagination, David Graeber's book *Revolutions in Reverse: Essays on Politics, Violence, Art* provides the opportunity for creative dialogues (Graeber, 2011).

room for misunderstanding, he clarifies that the ability to see what exists is not a whit more common than the ability to think subtly and deeply. Consequently, as Ilyenkov points out, a person with an undeveloped imagination sees in the world only what they already know: 'of such a person it is said: [s]he looked but [s]he did not see' (Ibid: 82). In this case, the real, concrete situation is merely an external trigger that activates readymade verbal stereotypes. Based on these considerations, Ilyenkov provides an excellent definition of the power of imagination:

> The power of imagination can therefore be defined as the ability to see things through the eyes of another person (without, of course, turning into him in reality), through the eyes of all other people, through the eyes of mankind, and to see not from the point of view of my individual interests, needs, and desires, but from the point of view of the long-term interests of the human 'race'.
>
> (Ilyenkov, 2007: 82)

To conclude this 'journey' into these interdisciplinary literatures, I argue for a new synthesis that I identify as *co-strategising research*: a mutual learning process based on trust and solidarity enabling, to use Lukács's (1971: 327) words, 'the clear establishing of the highest possibility objectively available at a given point in time'. This aim is achieved through an open dialogue with commonly agreed rules and a developmental exploration of dilemmas around 'what has been done', 'what could have been done' and 'what is to be done' in concrete situations, locating individual experiences within a broader ensemble of social relations. While this is mainly a proposal for the collective processes of the movement, the conceptual tools and frames summarised therein are the ones applied in this thesis, acknowledging and critically rethinking the limitations of academic research.

1.7 Life History Interviews and Other Methods

> *Scientists say that human beings are made of atoms, but a little bird told me that we are also made of stories. And so, each one has something to tell that deserves to be heard.*
>
> (Galeano in Goodman, 2013)

In light of the above methodological framework, the role of interviews was of primary importance for this thesis. For migration studies in particular, as Fedyuk and Zentai write, 'interviews have proved indispensable when researching vulnerable groups of people on the move, and collecting data about various aspects of irregularity, grey economic activities, and the autonomy and agency of mobile people' (Fedyuk and Zentai, 2018: 171-172). From the different types of in-depth interview, I decided to conduct life history interviews focusing on the activists' narration of their life story (Blee, 2013). This thesis is informed by a rich body of research on using life history interviews for gathering data on social movements and political organisations (e.g., Thompson, 1978; Bertaux, 1981; Passerini, 1989; della Porta, 1992; 2014; Rosenthal, 1993; Blee, 2013).

Della Porta identifies the distinctive features of this methodological strategy and distinguishes specific strengths and limitations. Focusing on the strengths, it is important to note that the primary focus of life history interviews lies in locating participants' subjectivities within broad social, political and cultural contexts (della Porta, 2014: 265). Della Porta argues that compared with other techniques, life history interviews are better suited to describing and tracing the processes by which attitudes are transformed into action and rationales for action are created (Ibid: 284, 285). In this way, Della Porta (Ibid: 264) points out that this type of in-depth interview enables reconstruction of the modes in which wide-reaching historical events penetrate the collective imaginary:

> Covering the evolution of the experiences of activists, life histories allow us to reconstruct the path of involvement in specific forms of political participation, the role of networks in socialization, the continuities, but also the turning points at the intersections between individual experiences and environmental transformations.
>
> (della Porta, 2014: 265)

These advantages are based on the assumption that the research participants have a sophisticated understanding of the world around them; subsequently, the interviewees are seen as participating in the making of history (della Porta, 2014: 267, 265).

The Sampling

Selecting cases was a crucial stage in my research. As Barglowski notes, 'samples must not be drawn in a probabilistic or statistic manner, but on purposive or theoretical considerations' (Barglowski, 2018: 8). To this end, I used the purposive sample method to select information-rich cases for in-depth study (Patton, 1990: 169). To concretise this direction, I examined a wide range of social movement documents and tried to identify the empirical incidents that were 'representative' of some wider pattern (Barglowski, 2018: 3). An additional criterion for selecting cases was their relation to legal struggles and important trials. In particular, I tried to bring together cases that revealed a 'complex, multidimensional kind of resistance' (McNally, 2013: 407), articulating diverse racial, gender, class, urban and rural experiences related, not exclusively, to the following:

a) border violence and reception conditions for asylum seekers

b) institutional racism, racially motivated crimes, and gender-based violence

c) violations of labour law, forced labour and union-busting tactics

d) criminalisation of immigrant political participation.

In light of the above, I conducted 14 life history interviews with immigrant activists and six open-ended semi-structured interviews with lawyers. Most of the interviews took place during the summer of 2019, while a few of them took place in the autumn of 2019. The activist interview sample comprises participants ranging in age from 28-59 years old and half of them are below 40 years old. The sample

includes 12 participants born in different countries in Europe, Asia and Africa, as well as 2 'second-generation immigrants' born in Greece.[15] The time of arrival of the 12 participants in Greece ranges from 1982-2008. More precisely, 2 of the participants arrived in Greece during the 1980s, 4 during the 1990s and 6 during the 2000s. While I mainly focus on the period between 2000 and 2015, participants who arrived earlier in Greece also shared their thoughts on the political situation, activism and the everyday realities that immigrants faced in Greece during the 1980s and 1990s. All of the participants have played and most of them continue to play a crucial role in the social movements in Greece and were related to specific empirical cases included in my study. I was especially careful to select participants that cover diverse political affiliations involving immigrant associations, trade unions, feminist and anti-racist organisations, as well as different parts of the Greek left, and different types of alliance building. While I tried to include many different groups and perspectives, it is important to note that migrants and refugees who arrived in Greece after 2008 are not included in the activist interviews. Another challenge for future research is to focus more on LGBTQI+ and disabled migrants.

Interview Setting and Process

Due to my own activist experience in Greece, I was able to use a network of personal contacts to approach the participants, either personally or through intermediaries. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and were audio-recorded in most cases. In one case, the participant preferred to avoid audio-recording and I kept detailed notes, which proved to be a difficult task. Most of the interviewees had a good knowledge of the Greek language, which is my mother tongue, and translators were needed in only two cases.

I always gave participants the opportunity to choose the interview locations, and I made all reasonable efforts to make them feel comfortable to speak. Therefore, the interviews took place in various

[15] For a map of the interviewees' birth places see Appendix 2: Map 1, 'A tale of 14 people'.

locations in Athens, including union offices, immigrants' centres, cafés in the city centre and the professional space of a friend that I often used for the purposes of this research. One interview was conducted in Thessaloniki and another two in Brussels, allowing the project to go beyond the national frame of reference and include transnational perspectives (Barglowski, 2018: 16). Before the interviews, participants were given an information leaflet about the research and were asked to sign a consent form.[16]

I always offered participants a choice of being named in the thesis and explained clearly that they could change their mind prior to my submission. 12 out of 14 participants preferred to use their own name. I asked them to carefully consider whether this choice would have any consequences for their safety, wellbeing, migration status and/or eligibility for services (Clark-Kazak, 2017); if they had a single doubt, anonymity was recommended.[17] One participant used a pseudonym and another used his initials.

I did not use questionnaires in this project. Instead, I prepared an interview outline to orient the interviewees on the same range of topics (della Porta, 2014: 268). The most important focal points were the following:

a) political formation and experiences of struggle before arriving in Greece

b) associational and political participation in Greece

c) movement strategising related to specific empirical incidents

[16] For the full consent form distributed (in English and in Greek) see Appendix 1.
[17] Blee and Vining (2010) place emphasis on the ethical concerns about the legal, emotional, financial, and social vulnerabilities to which activists may be exposed by being interviewed about their involvement in social movements and draw attention to the cases when the interviewees are under official scrutiny.

d) immigrant activism during the 2000s related to immigrant participation in the December 2008 uprising

e) the impact of the post-2008 crisis on immigrant communities in Greece.

While most of the interviews were conducted in Athens, where most of the participants were living during 2019, they provided data on empirical cases that took place in rural and semi-urban areas in the Greek mainland and the Aegean Islands, with a particular focus on the village of Manolada and the island of Crete.[18] Following experimental and participatory approaches (Krause, 2017: 19; Cox, 2015), the interviews were, indeed, an open-ended dialogue on activist theorising and the participants' role as active organisers. To prepare for the interviews, I developed good background knowledge of the organisation and social movement to which the activists belonged (della Porta, 2014: 280).

In addition, since the legal aspect of the chosen cases was important, I conducted six open-ended semi-structured interviews with lawyers, who were key informants regarding the legal aspects of the empirical cases. As Fedyuk and Zentai (2018: 174) note, even 'the most seemingly neutral and technical details of events, laws, decisions, and so on, include implicit opinions, silences, accents, and reasoning that rarely render information "pure facts"'. In line with Robert Knox's (2011: 37) formulations, the interviews aimed at framing the practice of politically inspired lawyers by theoretical reflection. To this end, my discussions with the lawyers revolved around movement strategising, focusing on litigation for immigrant rights, tactics and strategy in specific legal struggles, achievements and defeats, and the impact of different types of lawyering on immigrant activism. Based on my activist background and my professional experience as a lawyer, I had personal connections with these lawyer participants, and it was not difficult to approach them. Finally, I attended 30 court sessions as part of my investigation into the role of civil action lawyers in the trial of Golden Dawn.

[18] See Appendix 2: Map 2, 'Building connections between urban and rural areas in Greece' and Map 3, 'Athens is the first spark'.

The Analysis

Della Porta (2014: 285) insightfully points out that collecting, transcribing, and interpreting life history interviews requires many more material resources than one would expect. I acknowledge that I slightly underestimated this aspect in my selection of cases and structuring of the interviews. For example, the interviews often went beyond the expected two-hour timeframe and the scope of the interview outline. On the one hand, this deviation aligned with the experimental and participatory strategies I employed in this project and allowed the participants to 'actively shape the research inquiry and point to those areas not originally seen as part of the inquiry' (Fedyuk and Zentai, 2018: 172). On the other hand, it added difficulties to the transcription and interview analysis. To address these difficulties and remain within the time constraints of the research project, I had to rearrange my plan and reduce the cases presented in the final thesis, using those referred to the post-2015 situation in Greece as preliminary findings pointing to future research.

I undertook the following main steps to analyse the life history interviews. First, I kept a field work diary, where I noted all particulars of the interview settings and encounters, which proved a useful guide for later interpretation of the data (Fedyuk and Zentai, 2018: 184). Then, I transcribed the interviews and tried to identify codes that reflected the key research questions and themes using manual methods and 'a combination of open, closed, and focused coding' (Blee, 2013: 3). I coded interviews in Greek and translated, as accurately as possible, only the parts I used as quotations. I then reconstructed life stories through summaries following both a chronological and a thematic model. Rosenthal distinguishes between these two models, identifying the former as genetical analysis and the latter as analysis of the narrated life story:

> Purpose of the genetical analysis is the reconstruction of the biographical meaning of experiences at the time they happened and further the reconstruction of the chronological sequence of experiences in which they occurred. The purpose of the analysis of the narrated life story, mainly based on the procedure of thematic field analysis, is the reconstruction of the

> present meanings of experiences and the reconstruction of the temporal order of the life story in the present time of narrating or writing.
>
> (Rosenthal, 1993: 2)

A major concern about interpreting and presenting results related to the high degree of subjectivity involved in this stage of the project (della Porta, 2014: 279). As Blee (2013) explains, 'the point of life histories is to capture activists' meaning and emphasis rather than record the facts of history'. To avoid getting trapped in subjectivism, I tried to build connections between the main findings from the interviews, relate them to the broader context and combine them with secondary data from other sources, such as mass media accounts, visual and written materials, movement documents, NGO reports and trial records. The empirical chapters also include analysis of and engagement with theoretical literature and activist scholarship trying to apply Gramsci's approach:

> […] every truth, even if it is universal, and even if it can be expressed by an abstract formula of a mathematical kind (for the sake of the theoreticians), owes its effectiveness to its being expressed in the language appropriate to specific concrete situations. If it cannot be expressed in such specific terms, it is a byzantine and scholastic abstraction, good only for phrasemongers to toy with.
>
> (Gramsci: 1971: 201)

While I sorted and organised data in relation to *a priori* research hypotheses, a parallel process was in play: certain concepts emerged from the empirical data in an inductive manner, thereby extending and refining the theoretical framework of this thesis (Barglowski, 2018: 15).

1.8 Reflexive Reflections

In their reflections on the role of the interview as a tool in migration studies, Fedyuk and Zentai (2018: 174) draw attention to the symbolic role the interviewer might (in)voluntarily represent by their association with a certain class, gender, nationality, or race, and call for a reflexive reflection on the researcher's positionality when conceiving, collecting and interpreting data (Ibid: 174). They argue that reflexive approach helps us examine whether the data really do answer the questions posed, which

new and previously ignored research directions they open up, and whether the original research design requires further clarification and adjustment (Fedyuk and Zentai, 2018: 186). Following this methodological suggestion, I tried to remain open and reflexive, treating the researching self as a subject for intellectual inquiry (Stanely, 1993).

The main intersecting aspects of my personal background that I had to consider are the following: my role as a researcher in the context of a PhD programme, my own activist experience in Greece during the period under research and my professional experience. The third aspect is the trickiest, since it raises ethical considerations related to my three-year-long membership of the Appeals Committees of Greece (Presidential Decree 114/2010), selected by the Ministry of Interior from a list drawn up by the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR).[19] As a member of the Appeals Committees, I conducted, on average, more than 40 interviews per month with asylum seekers, following UNHCR principles of ethics in work with refugees and displaced persons (UNHCR, 2004). In every respect, the differences between conducting interviews in my previous professional experience and my positionality in conducting interviews for this project are striking.

Suffice to say that the Appeals Committees conducted interviews with asylum seekers inside police stations. Distance and neutrality were constitutive elements of my job description. The purpose of analysing the transcripts of these interviews, in the context of refugee status determination, is to assess if the applicants have a well-founded fear of being persecuted in their country of origin for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (UNHCR, 1951). At this point, I draw attention to Nyers' (2006: 47) critical insights into the fact that the ability to reason ('well founded') and the experience of emotion ('fear') is the basis for the definition of the

[19] An Asylum Appeals Committee is a three-member quasi-judicial body consisting of a civil servant as chairman, a member indicated by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and a member selected by the Ministry of Interior from a list drawn up by the GNCHR, an independent advisory body to the state. Their mandate is to examine second administrative (and final) instance appeals on asylum applications submitted by 6 June 2013 and rejected in the first instance by the hitherto indicated Ministry of Public Order (Greek Police officials).

refugee. As Nyers comments, 'being a refugee involves an expectation of displaying the appropriate qualities associated with "refugeeness" (e.g. speechlessness, placelessness, invisibility, victim status)'. Further, Fassin and d'Halluin write on the role of trauma in asylum procedures, focusing on the need for medical certificates as ultimate evidence for asylum seekers:[20]

> The refugee's body, thus, becomes the place of an inscription, the meaning of which relates to a double temporality: an inscription of power, through the persecution they suffered in their home country, and an inscription of truth, insofar as it bears witness to it for the institutions of their host country.
>
> (Fassin and d'Halluin, 2005)

By contrast, in this project, the life history interviews attempted to empower the participants as active, visible, and vocal subjects. The participants voluntarily participated in collaborative strategising research with the aim of identifying 'best practice' activism. To this end, my activist background proved influential in the process of conceiving, collecting, and interpreting the data. For example, at the beginning of each interview I gave the interviewee some personal information to build trust, including some biographical data and details of my activist background. As Blee (2013: 2-3) notes, 'scholars who develop a close relationship with activists may worry that in writing the analysis, they will misrepresent, misinterpret, or insult them'. Taking into account that the participants in this project had different political affiliations, I carefully considered this point, which was at the centre of my reflexive reflections throughout the writing process, in order to avoid misrepresenting them or attributing to them my own political perspectives.

[20] Élise Pestre (2012) describes it as 'instrumentalizing the refugee's body through evidence'.

Chapter 2: The Spectre Still Haunts. From Immigrant Militancy during the 2000s to the December 2008 Uprising

1. December 2008 protest. The banner by the occupied Law School of Athens reads: 'Murderers' (Babyonia, 2019).

2.1 Introduction

On 6 December 2008, a policeman shoots and kills Alexis Grigoropoulos, a 15-year-old student who is hanging out with friends at Mesologiou Street in the Athens neighbourhood of Exarchia. Almost an hour later, clashes with the police start in the streets around the crime scene and quickly spread all over Exarchia, while a group of people occupy the nearby historical building of the Athens Polytechnic. What came after that night (hereafter 'December') has been described as 'one of the most acute challenges to the Greek political establishment since the end of the Greek Civil War' (Bratsis, 2010:

190), ‘the Greek Intifada’ (Kalyvas, 2010: 354) and ’perhaps one of the biggest cases of street fighting in a European capital since May 1968’ (Sotiris, 2012c).

Part B (Chapters 4–6) explores some distinctive features of these events, focusing on immigrant participation in ‘December’ and rethinks immigrant militancy in December as the culmination of a long chain of protest events during the 2000s. The main hypothesis is that in the first decade of the 21st century, a minority of Greece’s immigrant population engaged in political practices in various militant, innovative and impactful ways. Research focuses on Athens, Greece’s capital, and its largest city, and presents certain distinctive stories of labour and feminist organising, citizenship struggles and justice campaigns.

Far from offering an exhaustive examination, this selective approach provides a view of emergent immigrant subjectivities during the 2000s and enables a rethinking of the uprising’s dynamics in the context of the broader immigrant struggles. These collective stories are interrelated with the life trajectories of four activists of different countries of origin (Bulgaria, Sierra Leone, Pakistan), including a ‘second-generation immigrant’ born in Greece to Nigerian immigrant parents. The chapters explore their leading role in militant organising, address how they dealt with decisive political and legal challenges during the 2000s and specifically emphasise:

a) the role of organisation and demands in the struggle;
b) networking and alliance/coalition-building;
c) legal and campaigning strategies;
d) the legacy of past struggles.

2.2 More than Riots: The Distinctive Features of 'December' with a Focus on Immigrants as a Decisive Factor

> *Comrade woman, comrade man. Revolted Greece. We, the smallest, from this corner of the world, salute you. Accept our respect and our admiration, for what you think and do. From far away, we are learning from you. We thank you.*
>
> (Subcomandante Marcos, 2009)[21]

Some months after the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, amid a global economic crisis, 'December' provided breathing space for critical/radical commentaries on crisis and resistance and attracted growing international interest from scholars and activists both within and outside of academia. As is usually the case with unexpected outbursts, even the naming of the events has been a thorny issue, posing the question of whether 'December' was something more than riots. To begin with, it is hard to overlook that riots were certainly a constitutive part of the events—the total cost of the damage was estimated to have exceeded 1.5 billion euros (Sotiris, 2012c: 203).

This level of civil disorder caused 'a generalised and, at times, hysterical anxiety' (Kalyvas, 2010: 354) that was evident in the responses of conservative critics.[22] As Davis (2008)[23] argues in his commentary on 'December', mainstream political and media reactions stereotyped the events as inexplicable anger and put the blame on shadowy anarchists. As opposed to mainstream reactions, Davis places special emphasis on the 'low-intensity civil war' which 'seems to have long characterised the relationship between police and various strata of youth in Greece'. As often happens with uprisings, Davis notes that 'although the seeds of revolt have been flagrantly sown, bourgeois society seldom

[21] On 2 January 2009, the Zapatista Subcomandante Marcos, addressing the 1st World Festival of Dignified Rage, sent the above message in Greek and Spanish to salute the Greek revolt (Subcomandante Marcos, 2009), available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTmg4ZiffTA (Accessed: 30 August 2020).

[22] For a detailed critique see: Sotiris, P. (2013b) Reading revolt as deviance: Greek intellectuals and the December 2008 revolt of Greek youth. *Interface: a journal for and about social movements.* 5 (2), 47–77.

[23] For an English translation of the interview see: http://masablogg.blogspot.com/2009/01/mike-davis-on-greek-revolt.html

recognises its own harvest' (Davis, 2008). In a similar vein, Power writes on the 2011 London's riots and insightfully comments that commentators would do well to take a step back and consider the bigger picture instead of a rush to condemn (Power, 2011).

In the case of 'December', in particular, the bigger picture reveals that the unfolding uprising proved to be much more than rioting. Kotronaki and Seferiades describe it as 'something profoundly more intense and politically consequential' (2012: 157), and propose the term 'Insurrectionary Collective Action' (ICA) as 'the articulation of scattered dissatisfaction into an alternative model of conducting politics' (Ibid: 165). The researchers highlight certain features of 'December' that are characteristic of ICA, namely the broad socio-geographic diffusion processes, the combination of violent and non-violent repertoires, and the role of important established actors. Kotronaki and Seferiades bring the example of the gradual mobilisation of 'second-generation immigrants' as indicative of 'December's' social diffusion—that is, the uprising's remarkable spread to broader social strata (Kotronaki and Seferiades, 2012: 168).[24]

The geographical diffusion of 'December' is also remarkable, with action breaking out across 50 cities in 40 countries (Ibid: 160). 'December' sparked enthusiasm in the movements worldwide, as the warm and methodologically insightful words of Subcomandante Marcos exemplify. At the same time, it sparked fear in the ruling elites, especially in Europe. For example, French President Nicolas Sarkozy rushed to postpone plans for educational and other reforms, afraid of spreading the 'Greek syndrome'; he was reported as saying, 'We can't have a European May '68 for Christmas' (Sarkozy quoted in Phillips, 2008). Proceeding with the distinctive features of 'December', the next two points proved crucial to my approach.

Firstly, Kotronaki and Seferiades emphasise the role of 'important established actors' specifically elaborating on the role of the parties of the Left. On the one hand, they point out that part of the Left

[24] This point will be specifically addressed in Chapter 5.

participated in the events (including disruptive protests), provided certification and contributed to a profound 'polarization within the political system' (Kotronaki and Seferiades, 2012: 160). On the other hand, they offer critical comments on the parliamentary Left. In particular, they note that the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) approached the insurrectionary mobilisations as 'the work of *agents provocateurs* manipulated by obscure powers' even after they had become socio-spatially diffuse (Ibid: 164). Elsewhere, they note —most likely referring to the Coalition of Radical Left (SYRIZA)— that 'even those parties of the Left that abstained from morally stigmatising the action, eventually sough to instrumentalise the insurrectionary cry it contained and domesticate it to their existing political programmes' (Ibid: 160).

Secondly, as opposed to those restricting the events to rioting, Kotronaki and Seferiades (2012: 160) identified the combination of violent and non-violent repertoires as a distinctive feature of 'December' building on McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly's (2001) work on 'transgressive contention'.[25] In particular, Kotronaki and Seferiades define certain widespread non-violent practices in December as 'transgressively disruptive' particularly referring to the occupation-based practices (Kotronaki and Seferiades, 2012: 160).

On these grounds, my attempt to apply the above conceptual framework to the examination of immigrant agency in 'December' aspires to contribute to better knowledge and understanding of engagements with the 'alternative model of conducting politics' (Ibid: 165). Bratsis notes that 'one of the greatest achievements of the December events are the linkages that have been formed between the current, largely immigrant and very urban, proletariat in Greece and the student, anarchist and other

[25] McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, divide contentious politics into two broad subcategories: contained and transgressive. Broadly speaking, this is similar to the distinction between 'institutional' and 'unconventional' politics. The formation of new political actors and innovation with respect to new political means is characteristic of 'transgressive contention'. As the authors note: 'Action qualifies as innovative if it incorporates claims, selects objects of claims, includes collective self-representations, and/or adopts means that are either unprecedented or forbidden within the regime in question' (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001: 7-8).

autonomous leftist movements' (2010: 194). With the aim to shed light on this great achievement, Part B examines the process of building some of these linkages in the years prior to 2008.

To achieve this aim, the chapter raises questions concerning the specificities of immigrant participation in 'December' and the role of non-citizenship considering that the vast majority of immigrants—including children who were born in Greece—were in 2008, and a lot of them still are, deprived of their right to citizenship. Kalyvas (2010) addresses these questions building on Critical Citizenship Studies (CCS) and, more particularly, Isin's (2002) work on 'insurgent citizenship'. Thus, he provides an illuminating analysis rethinking 'December' 'from the lens of immigration', which implies that the 'foreign becomes the decisive factor, the central signifier for a fuller understanding of the unrests' (Kalyvas, 2010: 356). In light of this perspective, the new element of the insurrection is precisely the appearance in the public realm of 'the figure of the rebellious immigrant in action', 'politicised, and confrontational' (Kalyvas, 2010: 360, 357). As opposed to the mainstream rhetoric presenting immigrant participation as a threat, Kalyvas notes:

> An important actor of the December events was thus criminalized, re-silenced, kept within the existing parameters of subordination, and in many cases ostracized. But negative distortions tend to carry a factual kernel of truth and in this case it is the irreducible presence of foreigners. As plunderers and burglars, outlaws and felons, misrecognized and distorted, the immigrants nonetheless kept a spot, a place within the insurrection. They were there: without citizenship, legally non-Greeks, sited outside the demos, politically excluded, and yet, acting, speaking, judging, deciding, occupying the public space, participating in the making of Greek politics.
>
> (Kalyvas, 2010: 357)

In this line of thinking, 'December' is perceived as 'opening up new spaces of citizenship from below' (Ibid: 358). Kalyvas demonstrates how militant immigrants in defiance of the exclusionary legal regime 'breached the fundamental constitutional norm of citizenship and legal belonging in order to perform and thus acquire the very substance of that norm'. This way, they became informal citizens, 'citizens *de facto* but not *de jure*', what he describes as 'citizens against the law' (Ibid: 358). With

references to the Ancient Greek poet and lawmaker Solon, Kalyvas evokes a *Solonian idea of citizenship*, the defining feature of which is partisanship:

> Civic participation is an act of choosing, making distinctions between friends and enemies, deciding one's position on the political field, taking sides on a public issue of common concern. (…) Political membership is not only a matter of prescribed juridical entitlements and formal privileges, of pure legality and abstract proceduralism, but also of informal concrete actions that contest the existing distribution of powers and the instituted structures of authority and representation in the name of a common interest.
>
> (Kalyvas, 2010: 358, 359)

The presence of the militant immigrant, Kalyvas adds 'signifies a radical redefinition of the political community and a resignification of the very idea and exercise of popular sovereignty' (Ibid: 360).

To sum up, I propose a 'journey' into immigrant activism in Athens during the 2000s that aligns with the above insightful ideas and builds connections between stories of labour and feminist organising inside and outside the workplace, citizenship struggles and justice campaigns before, during and after 'December'. These stories of struggle are seen as different forms that class struggle takes in its broadest sense. Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) is especially useful in this regard because it emphasises that 'important manifestations of the class as a political actor and an agent of conflict often takes place in the sphere of social reproduction, where these struggles have the potential to attack capitalist profitability' (Arruzza, 2017: 194). On the whole, taking into account class relations, gender, age, religion and legal status, SRT combined with CCS offer the most suitable conceptual tools for gaining a deeper understanding of the complexity of the aforementioned processes and their potentialities.

2.3 Clashing Views on the Legacy of 'December': No Leader, No Demands, No Organisation? No Thanks!

Before proceeding with a detailed examination of the specific examples of immigrant organising, it is useful to examine how the debate between hegemonic and post-hegemonic approaches played out in the case of 'December'. Based on the scale of the uprising and the admittedly crucial role that anarchist and autonomist groups played in its unfolding, it follows that for post-hegemonic approaches, 'December' epitomised their main theoretical positions. Cautious not to homogenise the different approaches among the anarchist and anti-authoritarian scene, in what follows I will cite some examples whose common denominator is a call for abandonment of a politics of demand and organisation.

A characteristic example is *The Coming Insurrection* by the Invisible Committee. In the introduction to the English translation, written in January 2009, the anonymous author(s) include some comments on 'the riots of December 2008 in Greece', as they call the events (The Invisible Committee 2009: 17, 18). The following passage illustrates how different conceptual tools lead to different conclusions:

> Tradition would have it that everything begins with a 'social movement'. Especially at a moment when the Left, which has still not finished decomposing, hypocritically tries to regain its credibility in the streets. Except that in the streets it no longer has a monopoly. Just look at how, with each new mobilisation of high school students —as with everything the Left still dares to support— a rift continually widens between their whining demands and the level of violence and determination of the movement. From this rift we must make a trench.
>
> (The Invisible Committee 2009: 18)

In the view of the Invisible Committee, organisations are 'obstacles to organizing ourselves' (Ibid: 15), legal struggles are dismissed as 'futile' (Ibid: 95) and the proposed alternative is the formation of communes, sabotage and the refusal to work. The Invisible Committee sees the Paris suburbs riots in the autumn of 2005 as offering the model 'No leader, no demands, no organization, but words, gestures, complicities' (Ibid: 113).

Turning to other currents within broader communisation theory, the analyses of 'December' offered by certain groups and magazines in Greece also provide illustrative examples of the post-hegemonic approaches. Consider the following joint statement by the Athens-based 'Ta Paidia Tis Galarias' and the Thessaloniki-based 'Blaumachen' in February 2009:

> The spontaneity and uncontrollable nature of this insurrection was proven by the absence of political proposals, thus by an explicit rejection of politics. It was mostly leftists that insisted in particular demands like the resignation of the government, the repeal of the anti-terrorist act, the disarmament of cops and the disbandment of special police forces (…) There were no specific political demands and this, combined with their ferocity, made the riots all too threatening for the usual forces of recuperation and manipulation.
>
> (Ta Paidia Tis Galarias and Blaumachen, 2009)

In his analysis, Woland (2009)[26] elaborates further on the position of Blaumachen on the role of demands in the struggle and explains how 'December' was the *experienced critique* of Blaumachen's previous position during the student movement of 2006–07. Before 'December' the group argued that certain demands, such as the demand for 'social wage', could 'constitute a political tool of questioning the divisions within the working class' (Woland, 2009). After 'December', they concluded that fragmentation cannot be questioned through demands, no matter how inclusive or radical these demands are. It can be questioned 'only at the moment of insurrection, during the practical critique of capital relation itself, namely the critique of proletarians' existence as labour power' (Ibid).

It is striking that their critique did not target only the 'usual suspects' (e.g. Left parties etc.), but also those elements of the anarchist movement that contributed to 'autonomous unionism' or focused on popular assemblies as part of a political programme of 'direct democracy'. According to these post-hegemonic approaches, popular assemblies and autonomous militant unions are seen as part of the

[26] The author, under the pseudonym Woland, later received heavy criticism from the communisation milieu for becoming a high-ranking cadre in the new SYRIZA administration after the 2015 elections (SIC, 2015). Here, the positions that Woland expressed about 'December' are critically examined in the context of *Blaumachen's* broader viewpoint during that period, independently of the author's later political and life choices.

limits that came ‘to reap the fruits of the rebellion and devour its energy’ (Ta Paidia Tis Galarias and Blaumachen, 2009).

Other commentators highlight the ‘lack of demands’ and ‘the lack of identity’ as the distinctive and powerful features of ‘December’ (Gavriilidis, 2009: 17), building on the Italian autonomist theorists (Agamben, Virno etc.) and describing the subject of ‘December’ as a ‘nomadic multitude’ (Gavriilidis, 2009: 18). In this context, Gavriilidis identifies the crucial difference between ‘December’ and the traditional leftist labour and/or anti-colonial movements of the 20th century as the absence of demands for ‘higher salaries, better education, or national independence and sovereignty’ (Gavriilidis, 2009: 16).

By contrast, Sotiris (2012c: 297) emphasises that ‘December’ was much less a ‘nomadic multitude’ and much more a view in advance of a possible future popular alliance or a potential counter-hegemonic bloc. In a similar vein, in his intervention in *The Nation*’s forum on ‘Reimagining Socialism’ at the beginning of 2009 Davis warns:

> Simply extrapolating from the present balance of forces, one most likely arrives at an equilibrium of triaged barbarism, founded on the extinction of the poorest part of humanity. I believe that socialism/anarcho-communism —the rule of labor upon and for the earth— remains our only hope, but the necessary epistemological condition for serious strategic and programmatic debate on the Left is a rising global temperature in the streets.
>
> (Davis, 2009)

This formulation draws a demarcation line that clearly separates it from two opposite formulations. On the one hand, it is opposed to those who rush to condemn spontaneous uprisings as irrational and irresponsible.[27] On the contrary, when Davis determines the necessary epistemological condition for serious debates, ‘the need for disorder’ and ‘the audacity to revolt’ are for him the point of departure.

[27] Lukács used to call ‘vulgar Marxists’ those who hope and pray for a return to ‘normality’, ‘even when the foundations of bourgeois society are most visibly shaking’, always seeing the rebellion as ‘an irrational and irresponsible act against the ever-invincible capitalist system’ (Lukács, 2009: 11).

On the other hand, Davis is also opposed to those who 'extrapolate from the present balance of forces' and see strategic and programmatic debates as devouring the energy of the spontaneous revolts. His approach is not a fierce polemic against post-hegemony but an open call for synthesis between the 'small stateless utopias' with the 'huge, confusing, soiled but heroic heritage bequeathed by two centuries of working-class and anti-colonial struggles against the empire of capital' (Davis, 2009).[28]

To sum up, the opposing views on the legacy of 'December' are related to what Kotronaki and Seferiades call the 'battle of significations', meaning the way in which December's memory was — and still is— 'constructed' in the collective imaginary and highlighting the pivotal role of 'deliberate political interpretation' in this construction (2012: 169). The position taken in this thesis is that 'December' raised the challenge of what Carroll (2006: 20) describes as the 'articulation of various subaltern and progressive-democratic currents into a counter-hegemonic bloc that organises dissent across space and time'. Carroll argues that anti-hegemony is not so much wrongheaded as it is incomplete:

> It hobbles on one leg, refusing strategy, leadership, organization, the state. Its insights, particularly on the value of direct action and prefiguration, need to be integrated into a strategically coherent form.
>
> Carroll (2006: 32)

2.4 Summary

This chapter identified some distinctive features of the December 2008 uprising, focusing on immigrant participation, and set the scene for the examination that follows. It appears that restricting 'December' to rioting obscures crucial aspects and is misleading in terms of the dynamism of the actors

[28] In order to support his post-hegemonic analysis, Woland has used excerpts from an interview Davis gave during 'December' in the Greek newspaper *Eleftherotypia* under the title 'Athens is the first spark' (Davis, 2008). While it is true that Davis described the absence of reform demands as the most scandalous aspect of 'December', it appears from his broader work that Davis' approach leads to different conclusions compared with post-hegemonic views.

and the legacy of the events. The chapter is based on the assumption that a deeper understanding of immigrant participation in the events requires turning attention to the often-overlooked links between 'December' and immigrant militancy during the 2000s.

In this context, the critical dialogue with post-hegemonic approaches was cemented by a critical review of specific positions on 'December' that could be summarised as advocating a 'no leader, no demands, no organisation' model. At the same time, a 'politics of the act' was rethought in the context of CCS, providing a point of departure for further elaborations on immigrant political participation as 'acts of citizenship', which in the following chapters are combined with an SRT-inspired approach exploring how class relations, gender, age, religion and legal status influence collective engagements and vice versa. To turn Holloway's (2002: 214) famous formulation the other way around, the following chapters invite the readers to think of 'a politics of organization', instead of 'an anti-politics of events'.

Chapter 3: The Stakes of the Crisis. Greece as a Laboratory of Neo-colonialism and Resistance

3.1 Introduction

Part C (Chapters 7-11) examines the new conjuncture in Greece after the eruption of the 2008 global capitalist crisis and brings focus into the role of the immigrant workers in the social movements of the period of crisis. Building on a twofold hypothesis, I shall argue, first, that after 2008 Greece was turned into a laboratory of neo-colonialism and resistance and, second, that the immigrant workers took the lead in decisive moments of the struggle, especially in the period between 2011 and 2013. The following passage serves as a theoretical and methodological point of departure for the detailed discussions undertaken in this chapter:

> It may be ruled out that immediate economic crises of themselves produce fundamental historical events; they can simply create a terrain more favourable to the dissemination of certain modes of thought, and certain ways of posing and resolving questions involving the entire subsequent development of national life. Moreover, all assertions concerning periods of crisis or of prosperity may give rise to unilateral judgments.
>
> (Gramsci, 1971: 185)

Along these lines, I elaborate on the above hypothesis, building on a growing body of literature that reveals the specificities of neo-colonialism in the Greek and European context of crisis after 2008 and situates this phenomenon within the global post-colonial condition.

3.2 The Paradox of Neo-colonialism: The Treatment of Greece by the Troika and the Immigrant Question

In the seven years following 2008, Greece lost more than a quarter of GDP. The Eurozone debt crisis and the bailout packages for Greece by the 'Troika' —that is the European Commission, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)— provide a view of the 'dark side of

the European integration' (Sotiris 2012b) and align with the long history of debt as a 'weapon of dispossession' (Toussaint, 2017). On these grounds, media reports and scholarly work have often described the treatment of Greece by the Troika as 'neo-colonial'.[29] As Tariq Ali explains, Greece has been reduced 'to the status of an EU colony, with all key decisions made in Brussels and Berlin' (Ali *et al.,* 2016). Kouvelakis elaborates on the specificities of the phenomenon and provides insightful comments on the role of the Greek bourgeoisie:

> The neo-colonial regime is better understood as a form of 'internal colonialism', an advanced case of a regime of subordination born out of the basic contradictions of EU integration, an enterprise of which the Greek bourgeoisie is fully a part. Facing a major crisis which, beginning in the economy, became generalized to the political system, that class preferred, once again, to accept the partial destruction of its economic base and the vassalization of its national state in order to counter the destabilizing potential of a popular revolt.
>
> (Kouvelakis, 2018: 29)

While acknowledging Germany's hegemonic role in Europe and its leading part in the political management of the Greek crisis, Kouvelakis distances himself from approaches that see Greece as a German colony or that turn away from class analysis. Likewise, he is cautious to discern the differences between neo-colonialism in the case of Greece and the classical form of colonialism based on military conquest and territorial occupation. At the same time, he underlines that the logic behind the Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between Greece and the Troika is, precisely, that of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) implemented in Eastern Europe in the 1990s and long before in the Global South.

In a similar vein, Samaddar, Director of the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (MCRG), has written about 'the post-colonial bind of Greece', pointing out that Europe has its own peripheries and depends on neo-colonial domination (Samaddar, 2016: 24). Samaddar proposes a critical post-colonial

[29] The following are some illustrative examples of these analyses: Ali *et al.,* 2016; Kouvelakis, 2018; Samaddar, 2016; Mufti, 2014a; Mufti, 2014b; Sotiris, 2012a; Douzinas and Papaconstantinou, 2011; Varoufakis, 2017; Vatikiotis, 2012; Vassalos, 2018; Vossole, 2016; Martin, 2016; Mason, 2015.

framework as the best lens through which to understand the situation in Greece (Samaddar, 2016: 11, 118), noting the importance of opening one's eyes to the world outside Europe and learning from the histories of debt and the traditions of anti-colonial resistance.[30] As the Calcutta-based researcher continues, his work on Greece and Europe has been written in a spirit of collective engagement and could be seen as 'a counter-commentary' in place of the usual Western writings on India and the post-colonial world in general (Samaddar, 2016: xiii, 118).

Both Kouvelakis and Samaddar emphasise the intersection of the debt crisis and the so-called migration or refugee crisis in Greece and Europe. In this context, I suggest examining the economic war strategy, as exemplified by the Greek bailouts, interrelated with the permanent war on immigrants, as exemplified by the EU strategy known as 'Fortress Europe'. A milestone converting this strategy into action has been the Dublin Convention (European Union, 1990), which first came to force in 1997 and was later toughened with surveillance and fingerprinting systems (the 'Eurodac' system). According to the Dublin Convention, the 'entry states', such as Greece, are responsible for processing asylum applications. In his work, Mufti identifies the two Dublin protocols as demonstrating the ways in which the EU's North–South disparities work on the ground with respect to the immigrant question. The following comments illustrate well his critical view:

> In a sane world, the politicians of the southern countries who signed the two Dublin protocols would be tried for treason. Since the overwhelming majority of undocumented workers, refugees, and asylum seekers entering the EU do so typically from the south and southeast, across the Thrace corridor or across the Mediterranean system of seas, and not from the direction of the North Pole or of Greenland, Dublin II in particular makes stunningly clear the inequality inherent to the EU as a geopolitical structure.
>
> (Mufti, 2014a).

[30] As Samaddar explains: 'The European scenario is typical. The European peripheral countries therefore may like to examine the ways in which debt crisis has been handled or averted or postponed —for instance in India, Malaysia, Argentina, all of whom violated global rules, imposed temporary capital controls, depreciated their currencies, effectively defaulting on debts, and followed expansionary fiscal policies at home' (Samaddar, 2016: 5).

In his analysis, Mufti highlights how certain immigration patterns were first set in France and UK in the 1950s and 1960s. Considering that the immigrant populations in these countries were largely from the former colonies, Mufti argues that these patterns re-established the imperial metropole/colonial periphery relationship in post-colonial times (2014a). Subsequently, contemporary anti-immigrant EU policies can be seen as the continuation of these immigration patterns. Focusing on the role of Greece with regard to the immigrant question, Mufti explains that in entering the European system, a society like Greece in effect became a former imperial metropole. This, as Mufti adds, seems quite paradoxical considering that Greece has its own history of foreign rule (Mufti, 2014a).[31]

In her book *Dangerous Citizens: The Greek Left and the Terror of the State*, Neni Panourgia (2009) further elaborates on this aspect of the history of foreign rule. From the many interesting points she makes, I distinguish the following, which add a historical background to my main hypothesis. First, she argues that Greece has been used 'as a laboratory for neo-colonialism at the outset of the imperial expansion of U.S. power after the Second World War' (Ibid: 30). Further, Panourgia relates this neo-colonial treatment of Greece to state repression against the Greek Left in the decades before and after WWII, and identifies 'the Greek Leftist as a paradigmatic figure of abjection' (Ibid: xxiii). She particularly focuses on political detention and exile camps and describes how dozens of islands, strewn throughout the Greek seas, were transformed into a web of fenced and strictly disciplined spaces of existence. In this context, Panourgia suggests that seemingly recent legal 'innovations', like the indefinite detention, can be traced back to these aspects of the Greek history (Ibid).

[31] Herzfeld offers insightful comments on the historical development of the relations between Greece and the West throughout the last two centuries, describing the phenomenon as 'crypto-colonialism'. As he explains: 'I shall call it "crypto-colonialism" and define it as the curious alchemy whereby certain countries, buffer zones between the colonized lands and those as yet untamed, were compelled to acquire their political independence at the expense of massive economic dependence, this relationship being articulated in the iconic guise of aggressively national culture fashioned to suit foreign models. Such countries were and are living paradoxes: they are nominally independent, but that independence comes at the price of a sometimes-humiliating form of effective dependence' (Herzfeld, 2009: 342-343).

Following this line of thought, I call the contemporary immigration polices neo-colonial in the sense that they reflect, here and now, the long history of European colonialism and state authoritarianism, which is yet to end in the 21st century. During the last decades, successive Greek governments have their own history of neo-colonial immigration patterns, especially practiced on a mass scale in the 1990s as a response to Albanian immigration to Greece. In this context, I shall argue that the Greek state is complicit in what Balibar calls the emergence of a real 'European apartheid' which is the dark side of the development of a formal 'European citizenship' (Balibar, 2004: 121).

In the period of crisis after 2008, the existing structures of discrimination in Greece escalated, leading to a well-orchestrated scapegoating of the so-called *lathro-metanastes* ('illegal immigrants') for crisis, 'making immigrant lives unbearable'[32] —or, as the then Greek Prime Minister, Antonis Samaras, summarised in his 2012 campaign: 'We will reclaim our cities from the illegal migrants that have taken them over' (Samaras, 2012).[33] It is no coincidence that one of the first initiatives of Samaras' newly elected government in 2012 was constructing a 12.5-kilometre barbed-wire fence with surveillance equipment along Greece's land border with Turkey at the river Evros.

Mufti (2014a) relates the patterns of anti-immigrant racism during the Greek crisis to 'the threat of the withdrawal of Europeanness'. Indeed, in the name of 'Europeanness', the Greek state was willing to assume the role of 'the gate-keepers for Europe's border regime' (Kouvelakis, 2018: 16), simultaneously creating favourable terrain for hatred against the immigrants already living in the country. This brings us to the following phenomenon, which can be described as the vicious circle of scapegoating. What happened in Greece in the post-2008 period played out in the European North as well, the only difference being that in place of the 'illegal immigrants' were the 'lazy Greeks' who, according to the mainstream tendency, deserved to be punished by the Troika. Patterns of racism

[32] These words were attributed to the Greek chief of police. Amnesty International (2013b) intervened by demanding the government's investigation of the case.
[33] Antonis Samaras was elected prime minister in the June 2012 parliamentary elections. This was actually one of the basic pre-election promises of the right-wing New Democracy party.

against the Greeks were partly related to the general stigmatisation of 'the Balkans' (Todorova, 2009) and partly to the racial framing of the crisis-ridden countries (Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain and sometimes Italy), the so-called 'PIGS', a term derived from the first letter of each country's name (Vossole, 2016).[34]

This vicious circle of scapegoating is linked to what scholars describe as 'a misplaced alliance within national communities' (Agustin and Jørgensen, 2016; Mayo, 2016). As the scholars explain commenting on the emergence of populist right-wing movements and parties and their impact on the working class:

> Misplaced alliances hinder the recognition of a subaltern, albeit heterogeneous, class and set the agenda for homogeneity as the main goal, ignoring the consequences of the capitalist system.
>
> (Agustin and Jørgensen, 2016: 13)

In light of the above, the most dangerous development in Greece, especially after 2010, was the rise of Golden Dawn, a neo-Nazi criminal organisation that assumed the form of a political party and managed to enter parliament winning 18 seats in the 300-seat Parliament (Greek Ministry of Interior, 2012).[35] This criminal organisation considered the immigrants 'subhumans who invaded our country with all kind of diseases' (Hellenic Parliament, 2012) and who even deserved physical extermination (Psarras, 2015: 19). The governmental neo-colonial immigration policies and the mainstreaming of xenophobic discourses created a favourable terrain for Golden Dawn, whose criminal activities escalated to well-orchestrated pogroms against immigrants during 2012 and 2013. As Glezos, the anti-

[34] Vossole (2016) relates the loss of sovereignty during the Euro crisis to what the Ghanaian politician and revolutionary Kwame Nkrumah defined in the mid-1960s as neocolonialism: the continuation of colonial power relations through processes of economic dependence, conditional aid and cultural hegemony.

[35] Indicative of the rise of Golden Dawn during the period of crisis are its electoral results before and after 2010. In particular, in the 2009 parliamentary elections in Greece, Golden Dawn had received only 19,624 votes (0.29%) (Greek Ministry of Interior, 2009). Almost three years later, in the June 2012 parliamentary elections 426,025 Greek citizens (6.92%) voted for Golden Dawn.

fascist veteran and SYRIZA MP at the time,[36] described the entrance of Golden Dawn to Parliament as 'one of the darkest pages in the history of Greek democracy' (*Kathimerini*, 2012).

From a methodological point of view, it would be totally misguided to assume that the rise of Golden Dawn was an automatic, linear and almost unavoidable result of the 2008 crisis. To take this methodological point one step further, I shall clarify that what characterised the changing balance of forces in Greece after 2008 was political, social and ideological polarisation. If SYRIZA's enormous electoral growth —they won 26.89% of the vote in the June 2012 elections (Greek Ministry of Interior, 2012)— is one indication of this polarisation, 'on the ground' there are even more indications of a general rise of the anti-austerity struggles that were often interrelated with immigrant struggles. Commenting on the balance of forces in Greece during the autumn of 2011, Kouvelakis (2011: 24) argued that the situation reached the point of what Gramsci calls 'organic crisis', when 'social classes become detached from their traditional political parties' and the masses '[pass] suddenly from a state of political passivity to a certain activity' (Gramsci, 1971: 210-211).

To sum up, the concept of the laboratory in my approach is, on the one hand, related to Greece as a laboratory 'for radicalized neoliberal and anti-immigrant policies' (Kouvelakis, 2018: 32) and, on the other hand, to Greece as a laboratory 'of new social forms towards an alternative hegemony' (Sotiris, 2013a; 2017b). This main research hypothesis is, then, situated within a Gramscian-inspired strategic hypothesis linked to the possibility of a new historic bloc emerging in Greece and Europe after 2008. While acknowledging the defeat of this project over the last decade, this strategic hypothesis is proposed as the best lens through which to examine the achievements, difficulties, failings, and hidden potentialities of each and every struggle that, one way or another, 'materialized the ability of society to be organized and administered in a different way' (Sotiris, 2018: 95).

[36] Glezos resigned from SYRIZA after the July 2015 referendum.

3.3 Towards an Alternative Conception of the People

A systematic approach to the concept of the historic bloc exceeds the scope of this research, as does the vast and growing literature on the concept of the people and its uses within different theoretical paradigms (Sotiris, 2017c). Instead, this chapter undertakes a more focused and eclectic reading, bringing together ideas that have strongly influenced my examination of immigrant activism. Samaddar, Kouvelakis and Sotiris are illustrative examples of contemporary creative readings of Gramsci's idea of the national-popular and stand out for their attempt to apply it in their analysis of the Greek crisis. Samaddar argues for the continuing relevance of the nation form of politics in combining classes, masses and the people and brings focus into the vast anti-colonial and post-colonial experiences (2016: xii, 20-21). In his approach, this is not meant to imply that nothing has changed in the 21st century or that the old tactics could be simply copied. As Samaddar insightfully notes:

> The global postcolonial condition involves the reproduction of the core-periphery relations, law of unequal development of capitalism, and the weak links in the capitalist chain, in as much it involves the modern neoliberal features of logistical production, extractive capitalism, and the mass phenomenon of transit labour.
>
> (Sammadar, 2016: 118)

Samaddar's recent and older work leaves no room for misunderstanding that the nation form is sufficient to achieve democracy. In fact, he challenges approaches that privilege the 'nation' above other forms of community and his work on mobility and struggle is far from the tradition of nation-centred histories (Samaddar, 1999; 2016; 2020). But at the same time, Samaddar is also far from those who underestimate or reject the possibilities of the nation form of politics and de-link these possibilities from their conception of internationalism. For Samaddar (2016: 6), it is clear that the nation form 'never meant in the first place an absence of internationalism':

> The new internationalism that the social movements (typically demonstrated in world social summits, Seattle-type demonstrations, and occupy movements) are justifiably proud of has strong limits. The legacy of the three Internationals has not died. That legacy can still show

> how to value the national-popular, peoples of various nations, their spirit of cooperation, and internationalism.
>
> (Sammadar, 2016: 21)

Similarly, Kouvelakis explains that the national context is of such strategic importance to the actors in the political struggle because it is the terrain in which the power relations among classes are condensed in decisive fashion (Kouvelakis, 2015). This is how he summarises the significance of the national level from the subaltern groups' hegemonic perspective:

> It would raise them to what Gramsci called 'the national-popular,' transforming them into a new historic bloc constituted by the exploited and the oppressed who then lead, seize power, and orient the social formation's development in an entirely new direction.
>
> (Kouvelakis, 2016b)

Kouvelakis clearly states that this reference to the nation opposes those who defend concessions to anti-immigrant rhetoric and racism to allegedly reconnect with the 'white working class'. Instead, the proposed attempt is to hegemonise the very concept of 'the people' that constitute the living substance of the nation in order to transform it into 'an inclusive, multiracial, multicultural, welcoming and sovereign body politic' (Kouvelakis, 2016b). In a similar vein, Sotiris proposes a post-national and post-colonial conception of the people based on the potential 'collective will' of all those who live and struggle together, regardless of race, religion or ethnicity. Within this framework, Sotiris argues that popular sovereignty reshapes the nation-state into a terrain of democratic struggle (Sotiris, 2016; 2018). Consider how he outlines the difficulties of this task:

> I am not saying that this is an easy task, since it requires a collective effort to build common struggles, to create common spaces of struggle, to fully acknowledge, accept and face the trauma of racism and colonialism, to see the histories, cultures and identities of migrants and refugees as contributions to the formation of a new popular culture, based upon solidarity and common struggle but also upon the struggle against all forms of racism.
>
> (Sotiris, 2017b)

Sotiris explains that what he calls a 'politically performative' conception of the people has nothing to do with the traditional 'constitutional' definition of the people and is conceived as 'a particular political condition of radicalisation, politicisation, mass mobilisation, and confrontation with the forces of capital, national and international'. As he adds, this conception of the people is not just a synonym for a class-based broad social alliance and, in fact, requires the emergence of a collective political subject (Sotiris, 2017b; 2017c).

In their analysis of Greece, Samaddar, Kouvelakis and Sotiris place special emphasis on the need for 'a strategy of de-linking from imperialist networks' (Sotiris, 2018), 'a politics of rupture' (Samaddar, 2016: 64), 'breaking free from the iron cage called the European Union' (Kouvelakis, 2018). At this point, I shall argue that the question of breaking with the Eurozone and the EU became the question 'involving the entire subsequent development of national life' (Gramsci, 1999: 409). In the heated debates on this question in theory and politics, the issue of sovereignty proved to be a thorny issue which also had an impact on intellectual debates which were directly engaged with actual politics and discussed theoretical concepts as a matter of urgency in order to address the dilemmas arising from the political practice.[37]

Focusing more on Gramsci's idea of national-popular, I now crtitically examine the work of Dimitra Kotouza and more particularly her book *Surplus Citizens* (Kotouza, 2019). Her rejection of the Gramscian idea of national-popular *per se* and the objections she raises to contemporary Gramscian-inspired formulations, initially, drew my attention to this work for its theoretical and political implications.

[37] Indicative of the debates on sovereignty is the dialogue between Balibar and Mezzadra (2015) and Kouvelakis (2015). Samaddar also offered some insightful comments on what he identifies as the 'Europeanist illusions' (Samaddar, 2016: xii). Likewise, Sotiris criticises approaches that take the framework of European Integration or other institutional forms of 'globalization' for granted (Sotiris, 2017a).

3.4 Criticising the Critic: On *Surplus Citizens* and the rejection of the Gramscian idea of national-popular

In what follows, I critically engage with some of Kotouza's main arguments. The main objection to her criticisms has to do with certain assumptions upon which her arguments are based. A characteristic example is her comment on left-wing sovereignty and Kouvelakis' idea of 'an inclusive, multiracial, multicultural, welcoming, and sovereign body politic' (Kouvelakis, 2016b):

> Is this ideal image of left-wing sovereignty —sometimes also imagined as 'inclusive, multiracial, multicultural, welcoming'— even possible in the current configuration of the global economic and financial system, or could its impossibility, along with its introspective and nationalist premises, intensify proletarian suffering and cross-national hostility? (…) The vision turns away from how national unity, in the history of left strategy as well, silenced class antagonisms at critical moments, and has been founded on the hegemonic figure of the Greek man.
>
> (Kotouza, 2019: 14, 277-278)

I argue that the several logical leaps of her argument are related to the scholar's misuse of the term 'left nationalism'. In particular, Kotouza homogenises in this 'left nationalist' camp the vast majority of the political forces which were active, one way or the other, in the social movements, including SYRIZA, KKE, the Anticapitalist Left Cooperation (ANTARSYA), and even tendencies within the anarchist and anti-authoritarian scene (Ibid: 238). This misguided assumption is not without consequences.

For Kotouza, deploying the history and historical political discourse of the classic division between Left and Right in Greece appears to be part of the problem. That is, invoking the memory of the WWII anti-fascist resistance in Greece and the National Liberation Front (EAM) is presented as an indication of 'left nationalism' (*sic*). For Kotouza the 'nationalist anti-fascists' (*sic*) failed to 'question the givenness of Greek unity'. As she adds: 'In effect, the fight between fascism and anti-fascism dominantly presented itself as a fight between two forms of nationalism' (Kotouza, 2019: 251). In contrast, I shall argue that the label 'nationalist anti-fascist' does not match any of the main forces which contributed to the movement. In fact, the main findings presented in Part C provide evidence

supporting this argument. Instead, my research will reveal remarkable forms of united struggles between the immigrant and the native workers against the criminal organisation of Golden Dawn.

To clarify my argument, the above critical comments are not meant to idealise the case for the Greek Left or underestimate that the anti-austerity movements had tendencies towards an anti-memorandum 'We' that excluded immigrants, silenced class antagonisms, or reproduced ethnocentric narratives and patriarchal norms. A characteristic example —not the only one— of these tendencies is the right-wing party Independent Greeks (ANEL) with which SYRIZA formed a coalition government in 2015. In this sense, Kotouza is right to emphasise that the victims of neoliberal crisis management are not the 'Greek citizens', but the subordinate classes in Greece, not all of whom are citizens (Kotouza, 2019: 3). Indeed, a demarcation line should be drawn between these two opposing world views.

Further, Kotouza draws attention to the fact that 'the struggles of migrant workers are, necessarily, qualitatively different than those of Greek workers, because they directly confront practices of bordering and the policing of immigration within the country's territory' (Ibid: 259). In agreement with this argument, my objection is related to the working hypothesis behind this position. As she argues: 'The key question is *not* how to strategically produce unity by organising a common struggle between Greeks and migrants, or, for that matter, among migrants themselves' (Kotouza, 2019: 203).

Concerning this issue, Kotouza not only disagrees with the Greek Left, but also with autonomist groups,[38] and authors such as Mezzadra and Neilson (2013). As she argues, these autonomist approaches do not pay enough attention to the fact that 'translation and solidarity cannot take place unproblematically among subjects constituted within asymmetrical relations of power, without directly addressing those asymmetries' (Kotouza, 2019: 203). In that respect, she warns that well-meaning attempts at solidarity with migrants can easily lapse into forms of patronage and control (Ibid). In agreement with her warning, I disagree with her criticism to Mezzadra and Neilson, because, in my

[38] She particularly refers to SKYA (Assembly for the Circulation of Struggles), a group active in Athens.

view, the latter's work offers very useful conceptual tools creatively applying Gramsci's notion of translation in its political transposition 'as a material practice forged from below within struggles, a grounding principle that links struggle with concrete situations' (Mezzadra and Nielson, 2013: 271).

To do justice to her argument, Kotouza acknowledges certain immigrant associations' struggle for identical rights to those of Greek citizens, as well as the role of parts of the Greek Left in these struggles. For example, she insightfully comments that the struggles of the Union of Immigrant Workers' (UIW) contribute to 'a material basis of cross-ethnic solidarity among workers' (Kotouza, 2019: 259). However, even these observations ultimately lead her to wrong conclusions like the following: 'The expectation that migrant and Greek workers are anywhere close to uniting in their struggle will be unrealistic until the division of labour in Greece stops being structured on the basis of race and immigration status' (Ibid: 259).

Skipping the most crucial question —who is in a position to accomplish this task?— Kotouza puts the cart before the horse, since it is precisely the unity in the struggles between immigrant and native workers that can address the asymmetries and challenge and potentially end the racialised division of labour. I suggest that Kotouza's analysis is based on a false dichotomy between the nation form of politics and transnational activism (Kotouza, 2019: 116).

To sum up, as opposed to this false dichotomy, I argue for the theoretical and political possibility of acknowledging the strategic importance of national context without degenerating into methodological nationalism, or any other form of nationalism. Likewise, I defend the idea of 'an inclusive, multiracial, multicultural, welcoming, and sovereign body politic'. In this direction, Dean's creative reading of Lukács' conception of the people as 'the revolutionary alliance of the oppressed' (Lukács, 2009: 22–3) complements the theoretical paradigm to which I refer. As Dean describes:

> This people is not a whole or a unity. It is a divided, divisive people, the rest of us, those of us whose work, lives, and futures are expropriated, monetized, and speculated on for the financial enjoyment of the few.
>
> (Dean, 2014: 73)

In my view, the common struggles between 'the rest of us' constitute a unity in the sense that McNally described the 'unity of the diverse'. As he explains, the 'unity of the diverse' is opposed to abstract conceptions of universality and difference and instead 'necessitates conscious struggle and self-organisation against all forms of social oppression' (McNally, 2015).

3.5 Summary

This chapter outlined the main hypothesis: after the 2008 global capitalist crisis, Greece was turned into a laboratory of neo-colonialism and resistance. With the aim of addressing the specificities of this phenomenon in the Greek case, the research situated Greece first within the structural inequalities inherent in the project of European integration, and second within the global post-colonial condition. From this perspective, the immigration patterns behind the Fortress Europe strategy were linked to the history of European colonialism and identified as neo-colonial. Special emphasis was placed on the Greek state's role at the forefront of Fortress Europe.

With regard to Greece as a laboratory of resistance after 2008, the simultaneous rise of the working class, anti-racist and anti-fascist movement on the one hand and of racist anti-immigrant attitudes and Golden Dawn on the other was viewed as an expression of the ideological, social and political polarisation during the Greek crisis. Research underlined the paradox of the signifier 'Greeks' as victims of racist patterns and of the same signifier, embodied by the Greek state and far-right groups, engaging in acts of racism against immigrants.

To solve this paradox, rather than adopting the homogeneous concept of the 'Greeks', this chapter, in line with CCS and SRT methodologies, proposed applying the concept of the subaltern classes, which are multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural and multi-gendered. Likewise, in dialogue with contemporary readings of Gramsci's reflections on the historic bloc and the national-popular, it suggested rethinking the issue of popular sovereignty through the lens of immigration. Finally, in a critical engagement with a specific analysis of the Greek crisis rejecting Gramsci's legacy, I

highlighted that it is not wise to subsume opposing approaches to sovereignty under the label of ‘left nationalism’ and perceive an anti-imperialist position as automatically ethnocentric, Eurocentric and exclusionary.

Part B

Chapter 4: Towards a Class-Based, Anti-racist, and Feminist 'We'. Migrant Cleaners' Activism and the Long-lasting 'December'

2. Poster in solidarity with Konstantina Kuneva (Initiative of First-Level Unions, 2009)

4.1 Introduction

> *In Athens, it is not just cars and banks that have been burning. Women are burned with vitriol for standing up to the medieval working conditions to which they are subjected. (…) As a woman, an immigrant, and a union activist, Kuneva was conspicuously 'punished' to set an example.*
>
> (Skoumbi and Vergetis, 2009)[39]

[39] This is an excerpt from an appeal for solidarity with Konstantina Kuneva and her colleagues, who were fighting for justice. The petition started at the initiative of Vicky Skoumbi, Editor-in-Chief and Dimitris Vergetis, Editor of the theoretical journal *Αληθεια*. It was published in international media, such as the daily *Libération* and signed by several intellectuals, including Daniel Bensaïd, Alain Badiou, Étienne Balibar and Jacques Rancière (Skoumbi and Vergetis, 2009).

At around midnight on 22 December 2008, Kuneva, an immigrant from Bulgaria and General Secretary of the Panattic Union of Cleaners and Domestic Personnel (PEKOP), was savagely attacked in the Petralona neighbourhood by unknown men on her way home from her shift. The attackers threw vitriolic acid on her face and shoulders and forced it down her throat. Her vocal cords, respiratory system and stomach were irreversibly damaged and she lost her vision in one eye. Even if it was scarcely reported in the media, this mafia-style attack, related to Kuneva's trade union activities, triggered a multiform and unprecedented solidarity movement in Greece and internationally.

Sotiris notes that the solidarity with Kuneva illustrates that the December uprising 'acted as a catalyst and accelerator for all forms of social and political activism' (Sotiris, 2010: 207). Along similar lines, it has been argued that this movement signifies 'the emergence of a new contentious élan' and 'a new militant unionism' (Kotronaki and Seferiades, 2012: 169). For Kornetis, it demonstrates that the broad transformative promise or potential connected with December was to a large extent 'channeled towards the raising of consciousness regarding the exploitation of foreign workers, documented and undocumented alike' (Kornetis, 2011: 1354). Based on Kuneva's leading role in PEKOP and the union's leading role in the solidarity movement after the attempted murder against Kuneva, this chapter examines the history of PEKOP, which represents a sector in which 80% of the employees are immigrants and the vast majority are women (Delorme, 2009). The main aim of the chapter is to highlight the necessity and the potential of what is described in Marxist feminist theory as 'a class-based anti-racist feminism' (Arruzza, 2017: 194).

To shed light on the above, I interviewed Konstantina Kuneva in the autumn of 2019. I met her in a café near the metro station in Petralona, where she still lives. After many surgeries in Athens and Paris in the years after her attack, she still has serious health problems. Given that she has lost part of the use of her body, she described difficulties in breathing, seeing, speaking, eating, moving and sleeping. As she noted, *'there is a whole organisational question behind the everyday activities'.* But she was very eager to engage in discussion for three and a half hours, covering a wide variety of issues,

including her activities as general secretary of PEKOP, 'December' and the attempted murder against her, the solidarity movement and the justice campaign, as well as her later experiences as a Member of the European Parliament (MEP).

Kuneva was elected as an MEP in 2014 on the SYRIZA ticket. As an elected representative in the EU, Kuneva contributed to the protection of the rights of domestic workers and care staff in the EU. A highlight of her contribution was proposing a Report adopted by the European Parliament calling on member states to include 'domestic workers and carers in all national labour, healthcare, social care and anti-discrimination laws and be enabled to join trade unions' (European Parliament FEMM Committee, 2016).[40] In the 2019 European Parliament elections Kuneva ran unsuccessfully for re-election on the SYRIZA ticket.

The findings from the interview with Kuneva are complied with background knowledge based on an extensive research into a wide range of relevant social movement documents, several interviews of union delegates and members, non-government organisation reports and media sources, as well as an additional interview I conducted with Kostas Papadakis, one of the lawyers representing Kuneva during the first two years after the attempted murder.[41]

PEKOP's story can be situated within the global experiences of struggle with groundbreaking campaigns such as 'Justice for Janitors' in the US, which inspired Ken Loach's film *Bread and Roses* and has been described as 'the icon for the new labour movement' (Erickson *et al*., 2002: 544). Building on the growing literature around methods of struggle in the cleaning sector internationally, I identified some factors that appear to significantly contribute to organising successes or shortcomings

[40] At Kuneva's initiative, a Report on domestic workers and carers was first adopted by the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) and was later approved by the MEPs by 279 votes to 105, with 204 abstentions (European Parliament FEMM Committee, 2016). The resolution calls for a 'professionalisation' of domestic work, to turn precarious and undeclared female work into recognised jobs, which would give domestic workers and carers social protection rights (Ibid).

[41] Kostas Papadakis noted that he worked on this case with the lawyer Daphne Vagianou.

respectively: ‘the value of union analysis of legal, industrial and political conditions’ (Erickson *et al*., 2002), ‘the need to have specific legal and campaigning strategies in place to defend migrant activists’ (Hearn and Bergos, 2011), ‘the importance of building coalitions’, and the ‘efficacy in appealing to the wider public’ (Erickson *et al*., 2002). This chapter attempts to examine the above factors in the case of PEKOP and determines which additional factors should be carefully considered.

4.2 The Creation of PEKOP, the Union Delegates, and Immigrant Participation

Konstantina Kuneva arrived in Athens in 2001 from Bulgaria with her mother and young son. They first arrived on a short-term visa and, then, benefited from the second immigrant regularisation programme in 2001. Her son needed to have an operation because of his serious heart problems and Kuneva started working two jobs in a supermarket and pharmacy in Athens. Kuneva’s mother started working with Oikomet, a large private company subcontracted by public institutions and private firms to provide cleaning services. As soon as she settled in Athens, Kuneva began searching for the labour unions. As she mentioned in the interview:

> *A family friend who was already in Greece for almost a decade advised me that if I decide to stay in Greece, I should better know what my rights are because the reality in Greece is different than Bulgaria. First I found the Greek Constitution in Bulgarian and read it carefully. Then I tried to find a contact with the labour unions.*

She did not speak Greek yet and finding a contact with the labour unions proved a difficult task. When she first asked her colleagues in the supermarket about the union (*syndikato* or *somateio* in Greek), some of them could not even understand what she was talking about, so she thought she might be using the wrong words. She even contacted the Ministry of Labour and, ultimately, through the Federation of Private Employees (OIYE) and the Centre of Athens Labour Unions (EKA), Kuneva learnt about PEKOP.

PEKOP was created in 1999 by two Greek women with little to no prior trade union experience. Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni —later the president and vice-president of PEKOP, respectively— took the initiative to create the union in an attempt to deal with the appalling working conditions in the cleaning sector. PEKOP started functioning one year later and the women had to fight step by step to build it under extremely difficult circumstances requiring commitment, motivation and serious risks (Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni, 2009).[42]

Kuneva joined PEKOP in 2003 when she started working at Oikomet, also her mother's employer, in the railways stations between Kifissia and Piraeus (ISAP).[43] As a new union member, Kuneva stood out for her innovative ideas and the experiences she brought from Bulgaria. Even if these experiences came from a different socio-political context, the union delegates and members really appreciated hearing her stories and tried to determine which of them could contribute to a better and more effectively functioning PEKOP (Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni, 2009).

During the interview, Kuneva spoke enthusiastically about the role of the unions in the Bulgarian factories *'in the old days'* before the 1990s and their protection of workers' health and wellbeing, especially women and their children. Apart from her brief experience of working in a chemical factory when she was young, Kuneva had a degree in history of art and archaeology at the St Cyril and St Methodius University in Veliko Turnovo. She was born in 1964 in a small village, which was an agricultural cooperative. As she noted, the children were raised up together in a collective spirit promoting active participation in everyday life activities, from protecting the village from wildfires to cleaning the streets and taking care of the elders. In her view, it was the Bulgarian educational system

[42] The interview Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni jointly gave to members from the editorial board of the magazine *Spartakos* in the spring of 2009 proved very useful for this chapter (Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni, 2009). *Spartakos* is published by the Organization of Communist Internationalists of Greece—Spartacus (OKDE-SPARTAKOS), an organisation that participates in the Anticapitalist Left Cooperation (ANTARSYA) and is the Greek section of the Fourth International.

[43] ISAP is an organisation of public interest and Oikomet the subcontracting company providing cleaning services.

and the Bulgarian society that cultivated a culture of mutual aid and creativity. While Kuneva never participated in any political party, as she has repeatedly commented, it appears that her political formation in Bulgaria played a role in her labour activism in Greece and her collective spirit in general. The following description, which she gave about the Bulgarian curriculum and the anti-fascist resistance in the World War II, had struck me as illustrative of the common history of anti-fascism in the Balkans:

> *In the alphabet book at school near the word anti-fascism there was a sketch showing Manolis Glezos taking down the Nazi flag from Acropolis in 1941. This was my first connection to the Greek history. And so many years later, in 2014, I had the honour to be together with Glezos in the European Parliament. This was a historic moment in my life.*

As a result of her active participation in the union, with her innovative ideas and commitment, Kuneva was the first immigrant elected to PEKOP's all-female board of directors, and was appointed general secretary of the union in 2004. For the following four years, she was re-elected twice and devoted all her efforts to empowering her colleagues and protecting their rights. When she first approached the union at the end of 2002, PEKOP had almost 350 members (Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni, 2009: 38).[44] By 2008, PEKOP increased its membership to more than 1,500. The union delegates tried hard to include undocumented immigrant workers in the union's ranks, or as Kuneva put it *'undocumented colleagues were more than welcome'*. Turning attention to the challenges the union faced in recruiting new members, Kuneva provided the following description concerning immigrant participation:

> *It is difficult to figure how things are working in a foreign country. This is reasonable when you don't know the language and you don't understand the legislation and the different culture. Everything seems too complicated and sometimes it is really a bit of a mess. The situation is even more difficult if you don't have previous experiences of struggle and don't know your rights. You are afraid of the employers, the supervisors, the police and deportation.*

[44] According to Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni, of the 350 members, 150 were immigrants from the Philippines (Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni, 2009: 38).

In addition, she pointed out that some of the immigrant workers in the cleaning sector, both men and women, did not agree with the union struggles and developed an individualistic approach which Kuneva described as *'the illusion of an easy way to solve the problems'.* Lack of time was also identified as a key factor hindering collective action. Further, in some cases, the women were discouraged by their male partners to become involved with the union. Kuneva's descriptions of the women's daily activities before, during and after the work shift reminded me of the Marxist feminist reading of Marx's *Capital*, asking questions such as:

> What did the worker had to do *before* she arrived at work? Who cooked her dinner, made her bed, and soothed her distress so that she could return to the job one tiring day after another? Did someone else do all this people-making work, or was it she herself who performed it—not only for herself but also for the other members of her family?
>
> (Arruzza, Bhattacharya and Fraser, 2019: 69-70)

Ignoring these questions that are 'structurally connected to gender asymmetry' (Ibid: 67) would make it impossible to realise the factors that influence women's participation in PEKOP.

A shortcoming that came up during the interview was the underrepresentation of domestic workers in the union's functioning and activities. As secretary of PEKOP, Kuneva met with domestic workers who made accusations about their slave-like working conditions, and she tried to help them. However, as she noted, PEKOP remained largely a union of cleaners —the participation from domestic workers was scarce. Kuneva observed that this phenomenon is mostly related to objective conditions in terms of the different everyday realities cleaners and domestic workers are facing, especially the live-in domestic workers. Subsequently, she concluded that protecting the rights of domestic workers, as well as recruiting members and keeping them active, requires specific planning. Based on her union experience, Kuneva suggests that domestic workers should form their own union in order to develop organising methods that would effectively correspond to their everyday realities.

To form a deeper understanding of the factors hindering collective action in the cleaning sector, in what follows the chapter focuses on gender violence and union-busting tactics.

4.3 Techniques of Control: Gender Violence, Union Busting and Resistance

On 25 December 2008, three days after Kuneva's attempted murder, PEKOP issued a statement condemning the attack, calling for solidarity and clearly stating that Kuneva was targeted as punishment for her will and insistence on 'being a true syndicalist that fought for workers' rights' (PEKOP, 2008). As scholars argue, 'the kind of attack performed against her clearly bears gendered characteristics' (Kambouri and Zavos, 2010: 151). Dimitrakaki (2018) rightly points out that 'destroying her vocal cords was perhaps symbolic of private capital's perceived right to silence any such militant voices so as to minimise the risk of insurgent politics'. Focusing on gender violence and union-busting tactics the years prior to the attack, this section yields insights into 'private capital's perceived rights' in the cleaning sector in Greece.

According to Kuneva, violence, particularly gender violence, was the most difficult issue for the union to tackle. Based on workers' testimonies and research conducted by the Labour Institute of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (INE/GSEE, 2009) during the second semester of 2008, the INE/GSEE report on labour relations in the cleaning sector brought to light several stories of systematic sexual harassment. Researchers found that women were assaulted and raped while working in isolation, or forced to have sexual relations with their supervisor or members of their company and contracting organisations (Papantoniou-Frangouli *et al.*, 2011: 79). Kuneva also referred to emotional and physical violence as a routine practice of supervisors, especially when workers reacted to breaches of their rights.

The aforementioned findings attest to what has been identified in Marxist feminist theory as the 'instrumentalisation of gendered assault as a technique of control' (Arruzza, Bhattacharya and Fraser,

2019: 27). For the authors of the *Feminism for the 99%*, gender violence takes many forms, all of them 'grounded in the basic institutional structure of capitalist society' (Ibid: 26). In this context, among other examples, they refer to sexual assault and harassment in workplaces where the perpetrators are bosses and supervisors:

> They *can* command sexual services, and so some of them do. Here, the root is women's economic, professional, political, and racial vulnerability: our dependence on the paycheck, the reference, the willingness of the employer or foreman not to ask about immigration status. What enables this violence is a system of hierarchical power that fuses gender, race, and class. What results from it is that system's reinforcement and normalization.
>
> (Arruzza, Bhattacharya and Fraser, 2019: 27-28)

From her personal experiences of emotional and physical violence related to her activism before the murder attempt, Kuneva highlighted an important incident that took place in Oikomet, the subcontracting company where she was working. Until 2006, she had not revealed herself as a union delegate. However, in the context of a labour dispute in 2006, her supervisor pulled her by the hair and ear and threatened to dismiss her because she was reacting to breaches of the workers' rights. At this point, Kuneva informed the company that she was part of the union leadership, which implied special protection against her dismissal (Law 1264/82).

As a result, the company was deprived of one of its main weapons: dismissing disobedient workers. The above incident explains several acts of revenge and intimidation that occurred during the following two years (2006–08). These included the arbitrary dismissal of Kuneva's mother and a *'constant psychological war',* as Kuneva described the treatment she received from supervisors, company personnel and other unknown individuals. Indicative of this psychological war were the false accusations of theft, wage withholding, the racist 'Go back to your home' comments,[45] harassment by dozens of extrajudicial orders sent to her home and death threats from unknown phone callers.

[45] It is worthy of attention that Kuneva received threats of deportation even after Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007 and immigrants from Bulgaria, like Kuneva, became EU citizens.

Realising that all the above were not enough to stop her activism, the company then tried to buy her silence offering Kuneva a highly-paid position as the person responsible for organising the shifts. To her credit, Kuneva refused the offer and continued her trade union work.

Subsequently, Oikomet proceeded to create a company-based[46] 'yellow' union with the aim of isolating Kuneva and PEKOP from the rest of the workers. This is how Kuneva and PEKOP described the union busting tactics:

> I have work colleagues with whom I normally have friendly relations who no longer dare to speak to me, or say hello, in case we are spotted by someone from management.
>
> (Kuneva in Delorme, 2009)

> They organize yellow unions in order us to be represented by staff managers and those obedient to the contractors.
>
> (PEKOP, 2008)

At this point, it is useful to consider an additional description provided by Maya, a female colleague of Kuneva also from Bulgaria and member of PEKOP:

> The company trade union initiated propaganda amongst the workers: 'Look girls, we have a problem with Kuneva's trade union, they want to shut down the company and you will lose your jobs.' When you tell 300 people that they will lose their jobs they get scared.
>
> (Schwarz, Sagris and Void Network, 2010: 226-227)[47]

During this period, many of the migrant workers were afraid to take part in the struggle and some even participated in the company union either because they were forced through intimidation and/or because

[46] There are three types of primary unions in Greece: company-based, productive sector-based and professional (Vogiatzoglou, 2014). The question of which union's type of organising is the most effective remains open in the ranks of militant unionism. In my view, it depends on the concrete situation, taking into account the objective conditions and the balance of forces.

[47] Maya gave this interview to a Bulgarian militant some days before the general strike in Greece on 2 April 2009 (Maya in Schwarz, Sagris and Void Network, 2010: 225-228).

they might have thought it was an 'easy way' to curry favour with the company. An escalation of the company's union-busting tactics came at the end of November 2008.

In order to contextualise this escalation it is necessary to consider the following. Apart from her general activities with PEKOP, Kuneva was particularly active in her workplace, demanding from Oikomet unpaid wages, as well as resisting contract changes that were often achieved through deception. As Kuneva explained, the employers were taking advantage of the fact that most of the immigrant workers did not understand Greek.[48] More particularly, the months before the murder attempt Kuneva led the fight demanding that the subcontracting company pay extra social security stamps because the cleaners were classified as having arduous and unhealthy occupations. To avoid paying these stamps, the company unilaterally introduced a forced break of half an hour to reduce the cleaners' working hours from 6 to 5.5 instead because, according to the law, 6 hours is the minimum length for the arduous and unhealthy classification (Papantoniou-Frangouli *et al.*, 2011: 80).

This brings us to the end of November 2008 and the tripartite meeting of PEKOP with the Ministry of Labour and Oikomet to discuss the dispute about unilaterally reducing cleaners' working hours to 5.5 per day. The yellow union called a counter-protest outside the Ministry of Labour to support the company. Eighty members of the yellow union, mostly supervisors, managers and, reportedly, a few immigrant workers, participated in the counter-protest. After the tripartite meeting, this group of 80 waited for Kuneva and the other PEKOP representatives at the exit of the Ministry of Labour and verbally attacked and intimidated them, following them aggressively to the nearby metro station. As PEKOP and other 56 first-level unions later stated,[49] the way the counter-protesters acted that day of November 2008 awakened memories of the assassination of the left-wing MP and peace activist

[48] Researchers on trafficking for labour in Greece found that deception is widespread in the cleaning sector as a means of achieving workers' compliance (Papantoniou-Frangouli *et al.*, 2011: 81).
[49] This statement was issued before the demonstration in Athens on 22 January 2009, a month after the murder attempt against Kuneva. At that moment, 56 first-level unions signed the statement. During the first months of 2009 more first-level unions joined the initiative, with the total reaching almost 100 (Koilakou, 2015).

Grigoris Lambrakis in Thessaloniki in 1963 (Initiative of First-Level Unions, 2009).[50] Thus, the activities of the yellow union should be added to the aforementioned techniques of control, including sexual, physical and emotional violence, racism, acts of revenge, legal harassment and death threat calls.

In light of the above-mentioned facts, I asked Kuneva to explain how the union delegates tried to achieve the aims of the union. Leaving aside for the moment the role of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE), as well as alliances between PEKOP and other militant first-level unions, the following appear to have played a crucial role in the union tactics:

a) Workplace visits of union representatives

b) Legal knowledge dissemination and lawsuits against cleaning subcontracting companies

c) Appealing to the wider public

Elaborating on organising and recruitment methods, Kuneva underlined that workplace visits provided the opportunity to empower the workers and break the isolation of the union. This is how she summarised it:

> *We visited the workplaces during the breaks. It was only for 10 minutes and, of course, the supervisors were often also there. But they could not prevent us from informing the workers about health and safety issues and their legal rights. We wanted our colleagues to see us, to realise that we are cleaners like them, concerned with the problems we are all facing and whatever they might hear about us at work or at home is a lie.*

[50] Grigoris Lambrakis (3 April 1912 – 27 May 1963) was a medical doctor, Member of Parliament, athlete and member of the faculty of the School of Medicine at the University of Athens. He was a peace martyr and inspiration for the international peace and anti-nuclear movement. In 1961, at his initiative, the Commission for International Détente and Peace (EEDYE) was established in Greece. He was murdered shortly after delivering the keynote speech at an anti-war meeting in Thessaloniki (Arvaniti-Sotiropoulou, 2020).

As part of the effort to overcome the language barrier, Kuneva described that PEKOP worked together with anti-racist initiatives and prepared leaflets about workers' rights in several languages. These leaflets were crucial to establish a communication channel with the immigrant workers during workplace visits.

Since her first engagement with PEKOP, Kuneva suggested that union delegates and members should carefully read the legislation and inform the workers so that they knew when employers or supervisors provided false or deceptive information. Even before her election to the PEKOP board of directors, when she did not know the Greek language well, Kuneva contributed to collecting and analysing the relevant legal documents in collaboration with her Greek colleagues. Later, in her capacity as general secretary of PEKOP, she worked closely with the lawyers from the GSEE legal service and contributed to some successful legal cases which forced the employers to respect some basic rules in the labour legislation. Further, the activities of the union delegates often included visits to the Body of Labour Inspectors (SEPE) together with the workers, who were willing to denounce breaches of their rights. Based on her experience, Kuneva concluded that most often SEPE did not act accordingly and the same goes for the Ministry of Labour.

In light of the inability and/or unwillingness of the compliance mechanisms to ensure the applicable legal standards in the cleaning sector, PEKOP tried to appeal to the wider public and raise awareness of the crimes committed against the workers in the context of subcontracting. To cite an example, PEKOP significantly contributed to the INE/GSEE (2009) report on labour relations in the cleaning sector. In addition, at the end of November 2008, some weeks before the attempt on her life, Kuneva gave an interview to a Belgian journalist in the context of the latter's visit to Greece on behalf of the International Trade Union Cooperation (ITUC). With the aim to internationalise the issue, Kuneva particularly referred to union busting tactics and the death threats she had received by unknown phone callers (Delorme, 2009). The interview was published in January 2009 and provided additional

evidence of the link between the murder attempt and the death threats that Kuneva had received, which, in turn, were related to her union activities.

In that respect, it is worthy of attention that some days before the murder attempt Kuneva reported to the competent authorities, first, that she had received death threats by phone, and, secondly, the use of undeclared labour within Oikomet. As she described in our interview the police officers ignored her and, even more, discouraged her from filing a complaint and taking further action. In addition, Kuneva requested a change in her working hours by moving from a night to a day shift precisely because of the threats she had received and her employer ignored her as well. While she was seriously concerned about her own safety, the general secretary of PEKOP felt that most of the people around her, including some of her colleagues and friends, considered her concerns to be exaggerated.

In what follows, the chapter examines the relations between PEKOP and other militant first-level unions in other sectors, as well as the role of the GSEE. In particular, via a slight detour into militant unionism in 'December' and during the 2000s, the chapter situates PEKOP within these broader efforts.

4.4 Militant Unionism Under Construction

Turning attention to the December 2008 uprising and the role of the labour movement, the events highlighted what has been aptly described as the long-lasting union elites' social discredit (Vogiatzoglou, 2014). At a time when the question 'Which side are you on?' invaded daily realities, the GSEE demonstrated loyalty to the government and the 'forces of order'. It is indicative that on 10 December the GSEE even rushed to call off the routine strike demonstration in Athens against the new year's state budget.[51] Unlike the GSEE, federations, student unions, the university lecturers' union and

[51] Actually, the Prime Minister requested from the GSEE and ADEDY to call off the general strike. While the latter was not cancelled, the GSEE cancelled the demonstration in Athens.

several first-level unions (e.g., unions of workers in telecommunications, the book industry, teachers' unions, etc.) independently organised the strike demonstration on 10 December (Lountos, 2012: 185).

The same day, trade unionists from this spectrum called an open workers' assembly in the Athens School of Law, which was occupied by students and workers during 'December' with the aim to transform it into a 'centre of struggle' (Athens Indymedia, 2008).[52] One day earlier, on the day of Grigoropoulos' funeral, three teachers' federations (DOE, OLME and OIELE)[53] called a strike and demonstrated against police brutality. Notably, the unions of elementary and secondary school teachers, and teachers from private tutoring institutes, significantly contributed to keeping alive the tradition of militant unionism during the 1990s and 2000s and have a long history of internationalist solidarity activities, including several initiatives to support migrants and refugees.

All these unions are part of a broad effort to diverge from the official tactics of the GSEE and Greek Confederation of Public Servants (ADEDY) and act in a militant and independent way. As a result of these efforts, the trade union bureaucracy has received heavy criticism for its role and practice, namely its acceptance of neoliberal strategies, its class collaboration and participation in 'social dialogue' with governments and employers, and its undemocratic structures that alienate workers from their unions and exclude immigrants and precarious workers in general (Koilakou, 2015). As Koilakou[54] explains based on her first-hand experience of the efforts towards militant unionism in general and her contribution to the Union of Technical Employees (SMT)[55] in particular:

[52] The extra-parliamentary Left and the Antiauthoritarian Movement of Athens (AK) played a crucial role in this occupation.
[53] DOE is the Greek Primary Teachers' Federation, OLME is the Greek Federation of Secondary Education State School Teachers and OIELE is the Greek Federation of Private School Teachers.
[54] Sylvia Koilakou is a member of the extra-parliamentary New Left Current (NAR). NAR was formed in January 1990 by members and cadres who had left the KKE and the Communist Youth of Greece (KNE), including an MEP and former MPs. NAR publishes the weekly newspaper *PRIN* and participates in ANTARSYA (NAR, 2012).
[55] SMT was created in 1999 and has been particularly effective in collective bargaining procedures, also covering those paid through invoices for services rendered (known in Greek as *blokaki*).

> These grassroots unions carry the logic of independent class unionism and grassroots coordination, which is far removed from the GSEE's logic of unionism, which subordinates itself to the existing system, as well as from the partisan unionism of PAME.[56]
>
> (Koilakou, 2015)

During the 2000s, unionisation procedures were launched in various productive sectors (Vogiatzoglou, 2014), such as catering, fast-food delivery and courier services, resulting in the Waiters and Chefs' Union (SSM) and the Assembly of Workers on Motorbikes (SVEOD), both founded in 2007. These two unions played an important role in 'December' and in the solidarity movement for Kuneva. Over the subsequent years, they devoted significant efforts to including their immigrant colleagues in union activities.[57] In many cases, SSM and SVEOD provided practical solidarity to immigrant workers in their sectors, dealing with abuse, including beatings and racist and sexist treatment by Greek and sometimes immigrant bosses.[58] Members of SSM, SVEOD and other first-level unions have often faced criminal charges in an attempt to criminalise militant unionism and solidarity.

[56] The All-Workers Militant Front (PAME) was initiated by the KKE trade unionists at the end of 1990s with the aim of contributing to a class-oriented pole in the labour and trade union movement. It is also opposed to the GSEE and ADEDY leadership. This effort is detailed in Chapter 10.

[57] To cite a more recent example, in the magazine published by SVEOD, there is a detailed report on the lessons learnt from the 24-hour strike SVEOD organised on 11 April 2019. This report includes a section referring to the importance of immigrant participation in the strike. Specific reference is made to two workers from Pakistan who refused their employers' proposal to pay them twice their regular daily wages in order to use them as strikebreakers. SVEOD stated that these workers exemplified high moral stature and are the pride of the union (Sto Relanti, 2019: 6-7).

[58] SSM (2014) has brought to light the case of an immigrant worker in a café in Marousi, a suburb in the northeastern part of Athens, who was beaten by his Greek employer and had his wages withheld. The union provided practical support to the worker, including demonstrations and interventions at the café, as well as legal support. According to SSM, the employer repeatedly threatened SSM that members of the neo-Nazi organisation Golden Dawn would burn the union's offices, and during one of the union's interventions at the café, the employer fired a gun into the air to intimidate them. It is worthy of attention that SSM (2016) has also organised struggles in Athens restaurants 'against immigrant bosses'. In one case, SSM organised a protest and made clear to a female employer from Japan that there is zero tolerance against sexist and racist treatment of the workers. In another case some SSM (2017) commented on the fact that the immigrant employers breaching workers' rights were 'self-identifying as politicised': 'It's their daily practice that proves which side they are on and it is obvious that their struggles in the past do not belong to them anymore' (SSM, 2017).

All the above unions have several differences. These are partly due to the different everyday realities in in the sectors they represent (let alone between the public and private sectors) and partly to the different approaches of the political forces active in the unions, including the extra-parliamentary and radical Left, anarchist and autonomist groups, and many independent militants outside these parties and groups. Focusing on the private sector, thorny issues appear to be, among others, the attitude towards the GSEE, with opinions ranging from simple opposition to total defiance (Vogiatzoglou, 2014),[59] representation in labor unions, federations and the GSEE apparatuses,[60] and attitudes towards the media[61] and political parties.[62] For all these differences and debates, and despite their limited resources, during the 2010's these unions played a crucial role in anti-austerity movements (Kanellopoulos *et al.*, 2017),[63] and in the solidarity movement for immigrants and refugees after 2015.

The history of PEKOP is viewed here as part of these unionisation procedures and this militant unionism during the 2000s. PEKOP shares the opposition and hostility towards the GSEE leadership with the above first-level unions. As PEKOP (2008) stated, the highest trade union bodies were repeatedly informed about the subcontracting companies' mafia practices and gave the same answer as SEPE and the ministries: 'We don't care' (PEKOP, 2008). Worse, GSEE officials intervened in the tripartite meeting in the Ministry of Labour at the end of November 2008 and supported Oikomet (Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni, 2009: 40).

[59] For that matter, there are also different opinions among the extra-parliamentary Left on the spatial separation from the GSEE during the assemblies and strike demonstrations.
[60] To cite an example, Koilakou has served as a member of the Board of the Centre of Athens Labor Unions (EKA).
[61] It is indicative that SVEOD refuses to give interviews to the media (Sto Relanti, 2019: 5)
[62] In unions where anarchists are stronger, there is hostility to political parties in general. Sometimes there is also debate about the electoral process, since anarchists and autonomists often argue for a common electoral list in order to minimise the risk of partisan unionism, while left-wing unionists argue for the right of the different factions to have a different list of candidates.
[63] Many of these unions after 2008, and inspired by the solidarity initiative to Kuneva, formed more steadily in Athens and other cities the 'Coordination of first-level grassroots unions'.

The earliest relations between PEKOP and the highest trade union bodies were established during the creation of PEKOP, when two experienced trade unionists helped Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni (2009) with the union's first steps. However, after their experiences in subsequent years with numerous cases of labour disputes, PEKOP's leadership concluded that 'the bureaucrats in the leadership of the Labour Centres and the GSEE administration only cared for their re-election' (Ibid: 39). Worse, the union delegates of PEKOP found that unionists belonging to the majority faction of the trade union bureaucracy were 'protecting employers who were affiliated with PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement)' (Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni, 2009). Kuneva also confirmed in our interview that while PEKOP was working closely and productively with lawyers, researchers and personnel working for the GSEE, relations between PEKOP and the GSEE administration were hostile.[64]

As a result, it appears the idea that PEKOP should find ways to act differently in order to be effective was mooted for a long time. Kuneva described that the leadership of PEKOP had long realised that in several sectors the problems were the same and the workers and their unions should struggle together. She added that the union delegates were aware of the unionisation procedures in other sectors and brought the examples of SSM and SVEOD. When I asked her about the solidarity initiatives of the first-level unions after the murder attempt, Kuneva underlined that joint action between PEKOP and other first-level unions had already begun before she was attacked.

In fact, PEKOP had already been in contact with militant first-level unions, as well as with women, migrant and anti-racist organisations since 1.5 years before 'December', and together they were trying to think out of the box in order to act effectively. In all the meetings in which they participated, the union delegates tried to distinguish which collectives and individuals might be capable of providing them with 'real and substantial support', as well as with 'proposals, thoughts, ideas, anything' on how

[64] It is striking that, according to the coordinator of the INE/GSEE report, it was only under pressure that the GSEE decided to upload the report to its website and thus make it accessible to the public for the first time at the end of January 2009 (quoted in Papantoniou-Frangouli *et al.*, 2011: 70).

PEKOP should move, because they were 'feeling trapped' (Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni, 2009: 40-41). In light of the above, the chapter proceeds to examine how Kuneva and PEKOP participated in 'December' and sheds more light on the contacts between PEKOP and the militant unions before the murder attempt.

4.5 PEKOP and the General Assembly of Insurgent Workers in 'December'

On 17 December 2008, at the initiative of a group of a few dozen workers (mainly from the anarchist spectrum and grassroots unions), the central GSEE building in Athens was occupied in the early morning hours. The first declaration issued from the building started with the phrase: 'We will either determine our history ourselves or let it be determined without us' (General Assembly of Insurgent Workers, 2008). Red and black banners were hung in front of the building, along with huge banners reading 'immediate release of the detained', 'no charge to the arrested', 'self-organisation of the workers' and 'general strike'. Self-identifying as the 'General Assembly of Insurgent Workers', the workers imaginatively found the Greek words that expressed their aspirations and at the same time corresponded to the initials 'GSEE' (in Greek), attributing a new meaning to the abbreviation. As they declared:

> All these years we gulp the misery, the pandering, and the violence in work. We became accustomed to counting the crippled and our dead—the so-called 'labour accidents'. We became accustomed to ignore the migrants—our class brothers—getting killed. We are tired living with the anxiety of securing a wage, revenue stamps, and a pension that now feels like a distant dream.
>
> (General Assembly of Insurgent Workers, 2008)

GSEE officials were outside the building discouraging workers who were willing to participate in the occupation activities. However, it appears that the workers ignored the GSEE officials. Three open workers' assemblies took place in the occupied building, with around 500 participants in each of them;

it is estimated that around 2–2,500 people passed by the occupation during the five days that it lasted (Sto Relanti, 2009: 8).[65]

3. The occupied GSEE building during December 2008 uprising (Prolet Connect, 2013)

Among the workers who visited the occupied GSEE on the first day and participated in the afternoon workers' assembly was the delegation of PEKOP, including the union's president, vice-president and general secretary. As the president stated, they learnt about the occupation of the GSEE building while they were at work and wanted 'to meet with those who had the courage to do such a thing'

[65] Apart from the assemblies held across those five days, the activities included three documentary screenings on workers' struggles in Greece and abroad, a discussion on the history of the GSEE from 1918 up to 2008 and alternative forms of militant unionism, as well as a solidarity event about the arrests and charges of people during the uprising, with the participation of the lawyers, relatives and friends of the detained (Sto Relanti, 2009).

(Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni, 2009: 43). During our interview, Kuneva referred to PEKOP's participation in the occupation as an example of the already existing relations between PEKOP and the grassroots unions:

> *Of course, we went in the occupation in GSEE. Various discussions took place there about the violence against the workers and our children and which way society is moving. I found these discussions very interesting. I was there the second day as well.*

In my interview with Papadakis, one of Kuneva's lawyers after her attempted murder, he also highlighted the importance of PEKOP's participation in the occupied GSEE and related it to his involvement in Kuneva's legal case:

> *Through their participation in the occupied GSEE, Kuneva and PEKOP came in touch with several militants. This is how these people were immediately informed after the attack. It was through these militants that I got involved in the case. (…) Those who contacted me had already met the delegation of PEKOP in the occupied GSEE building.*

The fact that the delegation as a whole and, in particular, Kuneva as an immigrant union delegate, 'a class sister', participated in the occupation secures a valuable place for PEKOP in the memory of the first phase of the uprising before the murder attempt and attests to the already existing bonds between PEKOP and the first-level militant unions. The contacts with the militants in the occupied GSEE were part of the broader network of contacts that PEKOP had created. This network proved decisive for the solidarity movement after the murder attempt against Kuneva. In fact, when PEKOP appealed to 'all the employees, Greeks and Migrants, the youth that has taken the streets, every honest woman/man with dignity in solidarity and support' (PEKOP, 2008), a core group of activists was alerted to respond immediately, precisely, due to pre-existing solidarity bonds.

4.6 'Konstantina, you are not alone': Thoughts on the Campaign Calling for Justice for Kuneva and the Abolition of the Subcontracting System

The solidarity movement began two days after the murder attempt with around 100 militants, mainly from the anarchist spectrum, who gathered outside the hospital where Kuneva was *'fighting for every breath'*, as she recalled. The following day, ISAP's headquarters were occupied in the Omonoia metro station (Solidarity Assembly to Konstantina Kuneva, 2010). The number of protests in solidarity with Kuneva that took place in many cities across Greece during the first months of 2009 was impressive. Indicative of the mass participation and the convergence of forces is the fact that on 9 January in Patras, Greece's third-largest city, the annual commemoration demonstration in honour of the militant teacher Nikos Temboneras,[66] organised by the teachers' and students' unions, joined forces with the solidarity protest with Kuneva and had around 1,000 participants. On 22 January 2009, one month after the murder attempt, around 8,000 people participated in the Athens demonstration organised by the Initiative of First-Level Unions.

Inspired by the occupied GSEE in 'December', several labour centres were occupied around Greece during January and February 2009 and transformed by the solidarity movement into 'centres of struggle' for days or weeks. Numerous buildings and administration offices were also occupied, including those of subcontracting companies, ISAP, the Labour Inspectorate, hospitals, universities and other public institutions demanding justice for Kuneva and the abolition of the subcontracting system. Occupation-based practices and other disruptive protests in the spirit of 'December' were combined with mass demonstrations and other public events. Some of these events, such as music

[66] Nikos Temboneras was a mathematician and a member of the Anti-imperialist Labor Front. He was murdered during the student protests of 1990–91 by the then chairman of the local right-wing youth organisation (New Democracy Youth - ONNED). The incident took place when a group of thugs linked to the New Democracy party tried to evict an occupied high school in Patras. Temboneras was fatally beaten in the head with an ironmonger while protecting the student occupation. His assassination sparked an uprising and Temboneras became a symbol for the student and teacher movement.

concerts, were part of the crowdfunding campaign, which was impressive in Greece and internationally and succeeded in funding the extremely high costs of Kuneva's medical care.

With PEKOP at the heart of the movement, three separate committees were founded: the Initiative of First-Level Unions, which rallied around 100 first-level unions (Koilakou, 2015), the solidarity with Kuneva assembly and the feminist initiative. While it could be argued that the first of these was more related to the extra-parliamentary Left, the second to the anarchist groups and the third to SYRIZA, this classification risks reproducing a static, homogenising and misleading understanding of political affiliations in a multiform movement organically related to 'December'. Either way, all the initiatives, despite their differences and debates, contributed in their own way to the ground-breaking campaign. A systematic examination of the solidarity movement to Kuneva would require considering dimensions that exceed the scope of this research. Instead, I would like to draw attention to three distinctive features of this movement that highlighted the necessity and the potential of:

A class-based, anti-racist, and feminist 'We'

The 2009 International Women's Day (8 March) in Greece was dedicated to Kuneva evoking what Marxist feminists describe as 'the spirit of early twentieth century working class women's mobilization' (Arruzza and Bhattacharya and Fraser, 2019: 6).[67] On this day, PEKOP, with the support of the Initiative of First-Level Unions, organised an event in the Athens Polytechnic on 'the modern slave-trade' that offered an opportunity for a broad discussion on the subcontracting system and the

[67] The authors are referring to the International Women's Strike movement in 2017-18 stating: 'Their actions evoke the spirit of early twentieth century working class women's mobilization ―paradigmatically the strikes and mass demonstrations led mostly by immigrant and Jewish women in the United States, which inspired US socialists to organize the first National Women's Day and German socialists Luise Zietz and Clara Zetkin to call for an International Working Women's Day' (Arruzza and Bhattacharya and Fraser, 2019: 6).

struggle for its abolition (PEKOP and Initiative of First-Level Unions, 2009).[68] One day earlier, feminist collectives and immigrant organisations called a demonstration relating the solidarity movement to the broader struggles of the feminist and anti-racist movement, raising awareness of domestic violence, femicides and the incarceration of sex workers (Committee of Solidarity to K. Kuneva, 2009).[69]

4. UAWO leading the demonstration at the International Women's Day dedicated to Konstantina Kuneva (Syriza Women's Network, 2009).

Concerning immigrant participation in the solidarity movement, the role of the United African Women's Organization (UAWO) stands out. With the crucial contribution of Loretta Macauley,

[68] On 4 March 2008 PEKOP participated in one similar event dedicated to Kuneva. The topic was 'Immigration, Working Class, Trade Unions' and one of the speakers was Javed Aslam, president of the Pakistani Community of Greece Unity (CEPIA, 2009a).

[69] Highlighting impunity, institutional racism and the role of solidarity, the feminist organisers explicitly referred to the murder of two sex workers in a central square in Athens and the case of a 22-year-old domestic worker from Ethiopia severely injured when her employer threw her from a second-floor window in September 2008. As they emphasised, it was only thanks to the solidarity of feminist and anti-racist collectives —both native and immigrant— that the deportation of the domestic worker was prevented while the woman was still in the hospital in a life-threatening condition (Committee of Solidarity to K. Kuneva, 2009).

president of UAWO, a group of African women worked closely with the feminist solidarity initiative.[70] The following excerpt from one of Macauley's speeches during 2009 illustrates her perspective on the case of Kuneva and the stakes it raised for the feminist movement:

> Now Konstantina Kuneva is not alone. But she was not alone before either. However, when she was screaming about being in danger, as other women did as well, she was not heard. This is precisely why we have to fight now more than ever. So that our voice becomes strong enough for us not to be in danger anymore.
>
> (Macauley, 2009)

To complement the picture of the immigrant participation in the solidarity movement, the findings from Kuneva's workplace are also remarkable. Her colleague Maya provides an illuminating view of what happened after the murder attempt:

> Initially we were afraid to join [the union], since everyone who did lost their jobs. But after what happened to Konstantina there was a huge wave and people started to look for help and to get together, to overcome their problems.
>
> (Maya in Schwarz, Sagris and Void Network, 2010: 227)

This is how Maya evaluated the first 3 months of the solidarity movement (December 2008 - March 2009):

> We won. We won a faith in the future, a faith that a human being, even alone, can shake up a large organization. This means that we just have to work in that direction. No one should consent to being oppressed.
>
> (Maya in Schwarz, Sagris and Void Network, 2010: 228)

Maya described the composition of the workers in Oikomet as an 'International —from Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Bangladesh' (Ibid). While the cleaners understood the murder attempt 'as a warning against everyone who works in that company to keep their mouths shut' (Ibid: 226), ultimately

[70] Once again, the pre-existing ties are crucial in order to see the bigger picture. PEKOP and UAWO were both particularly active in a campaign on the occasion of the 13th Antiracist Festival during the summer of 2008 with the aim to raise awareness of the 'invisible' world of domestic workers (Dimitrakopoulou and Tsiouni, 2009: 37; Delithanasi, 2008). This campaign was launched by the Network for the Empowerment and Support of Migrant Women (DES ME), an initiative by researchers and NGOs, such as the Centre for Research on Women's Issues (Diotima). The abbreviation DES ME in Greek means 'See Me'.

this feeling resulted in a drive for union organising. This victory over fear is an important finding and attests to Kuneva's view of 'solidarity as a survival strategy', which in Kuneva's case, as she repeatedly emphasised in the interview, literally saved her life.

The articulation of inclusive demands uniting all the workers

One of the main demands raised by PEKOP and the majority of the solidarity movement was the abolition of the subcontracting system in public institutions. While the demand seems simple and clear, the reality was far more complicated, as Kambouri and Zavos demonstrate:

> The demand for legal contracts in the public sector for cleaners and other temporary workers by default excluded migrant labourers from non-EU countries, as well as undocumented migrant labourers, who by law cannot be employed by the Greek state. This caused serious conflict between Greek and migrant women members of PEKOP.
>
> (Kambouri and Zavos, 2010: 149)

The following hypothetical case sheds more light on this conflict. ISAP is an organisation of public interest and Oikomet the subcontracting company providing cleaning services. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that ISAP is forced by the movement to abolish the subcontracting system. Subsequently, ISAP would have to employ cleaners as civil servants. Those cleaners who are from non-EU countries, like Bangladesh in the case of Kuneva's colleagues in Oikomet, would be automatically excluded from the hiring process by the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP), since by law they cannot be employed by the Greek state. In effect, the worker's 'International' as Maya described it, would have been divided.

The stakes were high. On the one hand, as Kambouri and Zavos underline, much of the solidarity movement was not particularly alert to handling the issue, seeing the cleaners as 'a homogeneous category' and 'fail[ing] to address the intersections of gender, class and citizenship impacting the experience of precarity' (Kambouri and Zavos, 2010: 152). The researchers see this failure as the result

of a ‘reductive approach that focused on only one dimension of inequality’ (Ibid). On the other hand, consider what happened next:

> After several months of deliberations, a new common position was forged, whereby the Union demanded legal state contracts for all cleaners regardless of national/migrant status.
>
> (Kambouri and Zavos, 2010: 149)

Based on the outcome of the deliberations, Kambouri and Zavos concluded that this inclusive demand articulates ‘a novel standpoint’ that ‘goes beyond traditional unionist practices that are framed within the horizon of the national social state’. As they explain:

> The claims put forth by PEKOP, although initially reproducing the split between Greek and migrant workers, eventually overcame formal status differences between women and engendered the possibility for enacting a shared struggle that encompasses Greek and migrant, EU and non-EU nationals.
>
> (Kambouri and Zavos, 2010: 153)

This way, as the researchers argue, the case of PEKOP shows that the articulation of inclusive demands ‘assumes the possibility of rights to formal citizens and non-citizens alike’ and ‘constitutes an act of citizenship’ (Ibid: 154). According to Kambouri and Zavos, this inclusive standpoint illustrates at once both the efficacy of what feminists have called ‘transversal coalition politics’ (Yuval-Davis, 2006) and the enactment of a politics of citizenship that transcends national entitlement (Ibid: 153).

In the opposite direction, certain autonomist approaches overlooked the above achievement and possibility. Based on the experience of the struggle in the cleaning sector, they mainly confirmed their position against demand struggles in general. As Woland (2009) stated ‘the result of such [PEKOP’s] union struggles will be the deepening of the divisions among precarious workers themselves, something that goes beyond the present division between precarious and stable worker’. Along similar lines, Ta Paidia Tis Galarias was highly critical of the majority of the solidarity movement to Kuneva:

> By equating subcontracting or precariousness in general with ‘slavery’, the majority of this solidarity movement, mainly comprised of leftist union activists, is trying to equate certain

> struggles against precariousness —one of the main forms of the capitalist restructuring in this historical moment— with general political demands of a social-democratic content regarding the State as a 'reliable' and preferable employer to private subcontractors and thus putting the question of the abolition of wage labor *per se* aside.
>
> (quoted in Schwarz, Sagris and Void Network, 2010)[71]

The above autonomist critical comments illustrate what happens when post-hegemonic approaches are used to interpret and evaluate concrete struggles. In other words, they are indicative of a viewpoint extrapolating from the present balance of forces. Actually, they skip from the tough questions of strategy and tactics, replacing them with a rather abstract call for the abolition of wage labor *per se*. As opposed to these approaches, I argue for a dialectical understanding of the relation between tactics and strategy and suggest that fragmentation is not objectively inescapable, as autonomists rushed to conclude in order to reject 'a politics of demand' altogether. In fact, the example of PEKOP shows that the articulation of inclusive demands, potentially, uniting *all* the workers is possible, but requires challenging legal constraints and adopting a 'more encompassing critique of capitalist social relations' (Arruzza, 2017: 196). As Kambouri and Zavos (2010: 154) summarised it: 'It is precisely the enactment of the "right to have rights", beyond formal entitlements, that forges the legal frontiers of citizenship enabling a new position or identity to emerge'.

Narrow understandings of solidarity could lead to activist practices that would exclude non-European workers. The case of PEKOP and its internal debates emphasise not only the possibilities, but also the challenges and the contradictions of the construction of a 'class-based, anti-racist, and feminist "We"'. This is an orientation that should not be taken for granted but should always be fought for. To sum up, I conclude that demanding the abolition of the subcontracting system and a civil servant status for *all* cleaners opened up possibilities far beyond the social-democratic horizon, especially when these

[71] The criticism of Ta Paidia Tis Galarias to the majority of the solidarity movement is in line with their objection to syndicalism per se, even the attempts of first-level base unions towards militant unionism. It is notable that Ta Paidia tis Galarias was also critical of what they described as the 'workerist tendency' of the GSEE occupation referring to the first-level unions that participated in the occupation.

claims were put forth by a movement building on the legacy of 'December'. At the same time, I acknowledge that, even though PEKOP and the solidarity movement made tremendous strides after 2008, a decade later cleaners in Greece are still deprived of their right to have rights.

Legal strategies organically related to the extra-legal solidarity movement

PEKOP and the majority of the solidarity movement centrally demanded from the Greek state a thorough investigation and the bringing to court of those responsible for the attempted murder.[72] This is how Kuneva's lawyer described in our interview the most crucial part of the legal strategies employed in the case of Kuneva the first period after the murder attempt:

> *We tried to appeal to the solidarity movement and the wider public in order to reveal and denounce the failures of the investigation. The most outstanding failure of the investigation was the valuable time that the police wasted during the first crucial days and weeks after the murder attempt. More precisely, police inquiry was focused on Kuneva's friends and family, believing the incident to be a crime of passion, despite all the indications that clearly pointed to her union activities as the motivation for the assault.*

The failures of the investigation were so serious that the public prosecutor sent back the findings, demanding an additional inquiry and, notably, the examination of Kuneva's employer as a witness.[73] After several legal actions and turning points, which will not be detailed here, Kuneva's case was, ultimately, archived. Based on this outcome, I asked Papadakis if he considered the legal part of the

[72] The minority of the movement was opposed to the logic of the legal struggle *per se* and refused to demand anything from the state or any other power. Some of the groups and individuals adopting this view claimed responsibility for actions 'to avenge Kuneva', such as destroying the offices of subcontracting companies or burning wagons in ISAP railways.

[73] The Greek criminal justice system is based on West European models. Public prosecutor's offices belong to the judicial branch of government and participate in the administration of justice. Public prosecutors enjoy operational and personal independence. A public prosecutor's main duty is to start legal proceedings, supervise investigations, question persons involved in a case, submit proposals to judicial councils and courts and lodge appeals. Superior in the hierarchy is the public prosecutor of the Supreme Court (European e-Justice, 2020).

campaign a defeat. Papadakis' answer illustrates which type of legal strategies can be identified as organically related to the strength of the extra-legal solidarity movement:

> *If it was not for 'December' and the solidarity movement, the case would have been filed much earlier and without any impact at a social and political level. Therefore, the legal defeat was overshadowed by the major political achievement and the roots of this political achievement lie in the December uprising itself.*

While not related to the criminal case, another aspect of the legal battle that deserves careful consideration is the following. According to Greek legislation, working hours include the time of transportation to and from the workplace. Further, as already stated above, before the murder attempt against her, Kuneva had requested a change in her working hours by moving from a night to a day shift precisely because of the frequent threats she was receiving. In 2013, by judgement of the First-Instance Court of Piraeus (Decision No. 3429/2013), the court found that the company failed to comply with Kuneva's request, while it was possible for her to be transferred to a worksite closer to her home and to the day shift (Vagianou in Mindova, 2013). On these grounds, the court decided that the company should pay Kuneva a compensation of €250,000 for a work-related accident.

There are two aspects worthy of attention regarding this court decision. First, PEKOP disagreed with this legal strategy and, with due respect to Kuneva's legal choices, as articulated in the union's statement (PEKOP, 2013), decided not to appear at the trial. It criticised this legal strategy as distracting from the criminal case and the main demand to bring to court those responsible for the assault. As PEKOP commented, throwing vitriolic acid on a trade unionist is attempted murder and not a work-related accident (PEKOP, 2013). While it is debatable whether the union is right or wrong here, in the first place these tensions are indicative of the level of interconnection between the legal strategies, the solidarity movement and the trade union.

In my view, the judgement of the First-Instance Court of Piraeus delivered a sense of justice. This became even more evident when in 2016 the Piraeus Appeals Court found that what happened to

Kuneva was not work-related and overturned the original ruling. The stakes were high and the judgment was heavily criticised. As the Centre for Research on Women's Issues (Diotima, 2017) stated, 'the conclusions regarding her [Kuneva's] legal case are of tremendous social, political and legal importance'. With the support of a broad legal team, Kuneva filed a motion to set aside judgement, but the Supreme Court decided to uphold the Appeals Court decision. However, it appears that the legal struggle is still ahead, since, as Kuneva informed me, her case is now pending before the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

4.7 Summary

Focusing on the acid attack on 22 December 2008 against the general secretary of PEKOP, Konstantina Kuneva, this chapter explored the history of PEKOP and the efforts to build a militant union in the cleaning sector during the 2000s. Kuneva's story provides a view of labour relations in the cleaning sector with a focus on how the private companies used special tactics to deprive workers of their political subjectivity. The chapter highlighted gender-based violence and union-busting tactics as constitutive of these special tactics. Learning from PEKOP experiences of struggle and the difficulties it faced is to the benefit of any serious attempt towards a new labour movement.

The findings of this study disrupt the assumption that PEKOP interacted with first-level unions and feminist and anti-racist collectivities only after Kuneva's attack. A key example of these pre-existing bonds was the participation of a delegation of PEKOP, including Kuneva, in the occupied GSEE building during the uprising. This important finding secures a valuable place for PEKOP in the memory of the first phase of the uprising before the murder attempt. Turning to the solidarity movement, its distinctive features attest to the lengthy duration of what Kotronaki and Seferiades (2012: 157) identify as ICA, an 'alternative model of conducting politics' (Ibid: 165).

In light of this, the findings related to the immigrant participation in the solidarity movement, after the murder attempt, are of primary importance. The chapter presented sufficient evidence to conclude that those who attacked Kuneva failed to silence militant voices. On the contrary, militant voices multiplied after the attack and fear was replaced by a drive for union organising. Further, the chapter pointed out the strategic importance of the ability to articulate inclusive demands against the 'realism' of the existing legal constraints and the fragmentation of the working class. It also highlighted how Kuneva's legal case and the strategies her lawyers employed were interrelated with the extra-legal social dynamic rooted in 'December'.

Chapter 5: ’18 Years of Silent Rage’. ‘Second-Generation Immigrants’, Activist Motherhood and the Right to Greek Citizenship

5.1 Introduction

The Greek citizenship regime in the first decade of the 21st century has been described as ‘one of the most restrictive regimes in Europe’ (Triandafyllidou, 2015). It derives from the constitutional identification of the people with the nation (Kalyvas, 2010: 358) and can be traced back to the Greek state’s tradition of repressing political dissidents and ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities during the 20th century. Unlike *jus soli* (birth-right citizenship), Greek citizenship has traditionally been based on *jus sanguinis* (the principle of origin or ‘blood principle’) (Christopoulos, 2013), reproducing a ‘predominantly mono-ethnic and mono-religious view of the nation’ (Triandafyllidou, 2015).

As a result, an estimated number of around 200,000 young people who were born and/or raised in Greece to immigrant parents (hereafter ‘second-generation immigrants’),[74] in practice, did not have access to the acquisition of Greek citizenship during the 2000s (Iliadis, 2015). According to the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO), during 2005–06, around 108,000 children of immigrant origin were enrolled in Greek schools (Delithanasi, 2006; Boitard, 2007). The consequences of non-citizenship became even more evident when many of the ‘second generation immigrants’ came to age and realised that —after reaching the age of 18— they needed a residence permit to live legally in the country they were born and/or raised in. They did not have Greek Identity card, full access in the labor

[74] Those who are born and raised in Greece are sometimes regarded as being ‘second-generation immigrants’ and they are distinguished from those only raised in Greece who are regarded as being ‘1.5-generation immigrants’. For reasons I elaborate on later in this chapter, I deploy quotation marks whenever the term ‘second-generation immigrant’ appears, and use this term to refer to the youth with immigrant origins in Greece.

market, the right to vote and stand in local, national or European elections and the right to travel freely abroad or live and work in other countries of the European Union (Generation 2.0 RED, 2013).

The chapter brings into focus the struggle for the right to Greek citizenship for the 'second generation immigrants' the second half of the 2000s, complied with their mass mobilisation during the December 2008 uprising. Further, the chapter asks how the African women, members of the United African Women Organisation (UAWO), contributed to the struggles of their children and explores the history of this organisation. Taking into account political achievements, legal defeats and hidden potentialities, the aim of this chapter is to shed light on the implications of citizenship struggles for political subjectivity.

5.2 '**Nothing was given to us. We had to fight for everything': The Story of Michael Afolayan**

Afolayan is an artist, musician, actor and performer living in Athens. I was introduced to him during the summer of 2019 after seeing Sophocles' masterpiece *Oedipus Rex* at the Veakeion Theatre in Piraeus, where Afolayan participated in the chorus. The interview was conducted some days later at a café near the African art cultural centre, 'Anasa'. Afolayan was born in 1980 in Athens to Nigerian immigrant parents and was raised in Patisia, a neighbourhood of central Athens. During his school years, his parents faced difficulties —common to all immigrant families— regarding the annual renewal of residence permits and their children's access to education. However, Afolayan was not aware of this situation, because, as often happens, his parents were trying to protect him, as much as possible, from this stress.

Some details on Afolayan's initial political formation contribute to understanding the broader context of his later activism. Afolayan listed religion, hip-hop and political street art as his main influences during the 1990s, when he was a teenager. Despite his later critical rethinking of his parents' religious background, Afolayan noted that during his early childhood, this background provided him with *'a*

sense of community and solidarity', *'an ethical perspective'* and a *'saving the world'* mentality. Through the television music video programme *Yo! MTV Raps*, Afolayan was introduced to a whole new world, and was particularly attracted to bands such as Public Enemy and their political messages and radical critique. This is how he described the homegrown hip-hop scene in the late 1990s:

> *The hip-hop culture was a big hub in Athens that period. There they accepted you for what you were, you exchanged ideas, they supported you. (…) And then it was the African-American diaspora and how they expressed themselves and their communities through hip-hop. In the local hip-hop scene they had a lot of respect for the Black rappers and by extension they also respected me. (…) In the 1990s you could meet there all kinds of people, poor and rich, people for whom the whole thing was just a trend and people for whom it was their whole life, true and authentic. And all this was political too (…) Hip-hop gave me the possibility to feel free, the possibility of mobility.*

During the late 1990s, Afolayan was a member of both the hip-hop band 'Interferences' ('Paremvoles'), using the alias 'Dash',[75] and of the graffiti crew '114'. The latter used political graffiti from Athens to Thessaloniki as a means of expression and a challenge to the existing social order. It is striking that the name of the crew, as Afolayan explained, was inspired by the '114 Movement' —a mainly youth movement advocating for democracy in the 1960s, an expression of youth radicalism and a source of hope only a few years before the coup d'état that brought the military junta to power (1967–74).

In 1999 Afolayan was 19 years old and was finishing high school when the police arrested him during an identity check because he didn't have a valid residence permit. This is how Afolayan described it:

> *That was a critical moment for my political development. When they told me that I did not have a valid residence permit I kept repeating that I was born here. I felt as if they were not talking to me. I was detained for some days. I was really shocked. Until then I never thought of myself as an immigrant, second generation or anything. Then, gradually, waiting in the same queues,*

[75] Afolayan recently participated in the documentary *Every Single Day*, about the history of the Greek hip-hop scene, along with other well-known Greek MCs. (Gerousis, 2017). Available with English subtitles at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=9cWb8RpRkYA&feature=emb_logo (Accessed: 7 September 2020).

> *filling the same applications, caught in the same stressful and bureaucratic situation, I said yes, I am an immigrant, a second-generation immigrant and I have to fight for my rights.*

Subsequently, Afolayan was caught in limbo and remained completely without papers until the immigrant regularisation programme in 2001. During that period, according to the state, he was considered illegal and was expected to move to Nigeria, a country he had never visited in his life. Even after 2001, when Afolayan obtained a residence and work permit, the problems and restrictions related to non-citizenship did not stop.[76] In 2003, for example, when he was invited in Paris for a street theatre project, he faced tremendous bureaucratic obstacles and 'moved heaven and earth', as he described it, to get to France. This experience of travelling abroad was also crucial to the next steps Afolayan took:

> *When I visited the African art and culture museums in Paris I realised that the white people, sorry to put it this way, were far more informed about Africa than me. After this trip to France I wanted to come closer to my roots. Culture was the first passage. I started practising djembe and turned to ethnomusicology which I really love. Through hip-hop I was only close to the African-American movement but I didn't know much about history until then. Afterwards, I started studying the history of Africa, colonialism, slave trade, the abolitionist movement etc. and became obsessed with documentaries.*

After the Greek Forum of Migrants (GFM)[77] was created in 2002, Afolayan approached it and raised the issue of the right to Greek citizenship for 'second-generation immigrants'. This was the beginning of his longstanding involvement in citizenship struggles: *'I am in this struggle since I was 20 years old. Wherever I stand I speak for the rights of the second generation. Nothing was given to us. We had to fight for everything'.*

[76] In most cases, those who applied for residence permit had a certificate saying that they had submitted their documents and were waiting for their permit to be issued. Due to the delays, the permit was often issued only after it had already expired.

[77] GFM is a network of migrant organisations and communities in Greece. It was founded in September 2002 and functions as a union body. Its membership today comprises around 40 communities and organisations. For more information see GFM (n.d.), available at: https://www.migrant.gr/cgibin/pages/index.pl?arlang=English&argenkat=&arcode=170123194122&type=article (Accessed: 6 September 2020).

In 2005, through the GFM, Afolayan learnt that a group of African women were organising meetings and discussing their children's rights as a matter of urgency. This is how Afolayan approached UAWO and joined the 'No to racism from the baby's cot' campaign. Before examining the unfolding of this campaign, I discuss African women who organised these meetings in 2005.

5.3 Sisterhood and Struggle: The United African Women's Organisation and its President, Loretta Macauley

> *Wake up African women and men! Wake up immigrants! Immigrants in Europe and America are ahead of us. Let's try to reach them. Come out so that the Greek State knows that we are not satisfied with the way we are treated! Athens, 1 May 2008*
>
> (UAWO, 2008)

My interview with the president of UAWO, Macauley, presented the opportunity to discuss the working and living conditions of African women in Greece since the 1980's, the creation of UAWO and the struggles of UAWO members the second half of the 2000s. I was introduced to Macauley by a friend and member of the feminist initiative Zero Tolerance. When I met her at the end of summer 2019, UAWO members were preparing a series of events along with the European Network of People of African Descent (ENPAD) in the context of UAWO's ongoing study of Black and Afro-feminist traditions.[78]

As Emejulu and Sobande (2019: 6) argue in their recent work, locating Black feminist and Afro-feminist politics in Europe is provocative because it is radical counter-storytelling about whose knowledge counts, whose politics matter and who gets to be part of the 'European story'. Emejulu and Sobande define Black feminism 'as both a theory and a politics of affirmation and liberation' and 'as a praxis that identifies women racialised as Black as knowing agents for social change' (2019: 3).

[78] The series events centred on the theme of 'Sisterhood and Struggle: Writing Black Women's Political Leadership', which inspired the title of this section. The first was a public lecture by Carole Boyce Davies (UAWO, 2019).

Along these lines, I would like to suggest that Macauley's narration exemplifies a radical counter-storytelling *par excellence*.

Macauley was born in Freetown, the capital and largest city of Sierra Leone. Freetown's port is strategically placed on the Atlantic Ocean, and its history is interrelated with the history of colonialism, the slave trade and war in a vicious circle that has never ended. Macauley's response to my question about her political formation in Sierra Leone in the 1970s is indicative:

> *If you talked politically you would disappear, you and your family. I didn't like what was going on. I wanted to speak up. My family was very afraid because our life would be in danger. There are so many who lost their lives in prison. It was a nightmare. (…) We were cut off from the outside world. The newspapers were pro-government. Progressive books were forbidden. Even Bob Marley was forbidden. People brought his music secretly from outside the country. We had to hide to listen to his music, but he opened the eyes of many people in my country.*[79]

Macauley arrived in Greece from Sierra Leone in 1982. The 1980s are often described in Greek history as the years of 'the change'. This was the main slogan of Andreas Papandreou, the leader of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), in 1981 when PASOK was first elected on a highly progressive platform. Various interpretations of PASOK and the 1980s flourished in crisis-ridden Greece after 2008, often combining scientific approaches with nostalgia and humorous trolling. In this context, I suggest that seeing the years of 'the change' through Macauley's eyes is a theoretical and political exercise in decolonising relevant debates.

After her arrival in Greece, Macauley realised that there was no way for her to obtain asylum despite the situation in Sierra Leone. Some other women, also undocumented, told her that her only alternative was to engage in domestic work services. Macauley followed their advice and soon became a live-in domestic worker in Athens. This is how she described her working and living conditions during the 1980s —the years of 'change'— and most of the 1990s:

[79] Among other recollections, Macauley spoke of continuous electricity blackouts 'that could last for half a year', malnutrition and lack of access to healthcare.

> *It is as if you don't exist. Even if you die you are nowhere registered. Nobody cares. You are invisible. When you face abuse, racist comments or sexual harassment by your employers you feel as if there is nothing you can do about it. Always the same threat: they will call the police and you will get deported. A friend of mine who asked for her wages was, indeed, deported together with her child.*

The number of African immigrants in Greece during the 1980s and 1990s was relatively small and most of the women Macauley knew were undocumented. As she described, the role of the African associations of Greece was at the time mostly restricted to organising celebrations and religious activities. These were the social activities that gave the African women, especially those employed as domestic workers, an opportunity to socialise. However, even when they were sharing their problems, as Macauley described, they were *'only among each other', 'without contacts'* and still feeling *'isolated, powerless and afraid to react'.*

After the first immigrant regularisation programme in 1998, Macauley managed to obtain a residence permit. This was of course a positive step compared with the legal void she had faced previously, although Macauley emphasised the bureaucratic and problematic procedure she had to go through. In particular, the renewal of the residence permit was based on exclusionary requirements, such as the proof of legal employment and a number of necessary social security stamps. To borrow a phrase de Genova (2017: 25) used to describe the Schengen visa regime, the social security stamps became 'a vast machine of migrant illegalization'. Macauley endured this experience of 'illegalization' when, in 2004, she was wrongfully fired from her job of 11 years without compensation and could not renew her residence permit. The moment she was again 'illegalised' was also the turning point for her political involvement:

> *I rethought all the years I spent without papers and I said to myself I cannot do it again. A friend of mine told me she knew a woman from Albania who was an activist and gave me her phone number. I went to meet her. As soon as I saw her I started crying. I told her that my passport had expired, I had no money and I couldn't renew my residence permit.*

This woman introduced Macauley to the women's organisations and encouraged her to talk about her problem. Macauley started participating in the meetings but in the beginning, she was reluctant to talk. As she described it:

> *It's not easy, you know. But then I thought I had two choices. Either share my problem and try to find a solution or stay with my fears and possibly face deportation. I left my fears behind because I was more afraid to be deported.*

Despite her lack of legal papers at the time, she joined various campaigns and demonstrations in Athens. The following two examples are illustrative. Firstly, together with the women's organisations, Macauley visited the notorious immigrant detention centre in Amygdaleza and spoke to the journalists —for the first time in her life— about the appalling detention conditions she had witnessed. Secondly, she described to me her feelings of enthusiasm and fearlessness when she participated in a massive assembly at Syntagma Square in solidarity with the Kurdish people against the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan on Imrali Island.

Her general impression based on her involvement in these broader social movement activities was more than positive. At a personal level, she had been able to renew her residence permit through the solidarity of the activist networks. At a collective level, she started working out plans for an organisation of African women:

> *I was thinking, 'Look at the white women how organised they are and the power they have! We, the women from Africa, should also form our own organisation, speak for ourselves and stand up for our rights'.*

This idea was mooted for around half a year until the beginning of 2005, when Macauley took advantage of a random event and put forward her plan. As she explained:

> *I joined some new friends from the women's organisations at a political event. I didn't know details about the event. It appeared that the main speaker was the president of SYPIZA, Alekos Alavanos. My presence attracted the journalists' attention. It was unusual to see a Black woman in a political event. The following days I met a lot of women who had seen me in the*

> *news. Some of them even thought I had been in the parliament and they were very excited. I felt it was the right time to talk to them about the idea to form an organisation.*

Macauley spoke to around 50 women, collected phone numbers and called the first meeting of African women, with the help of the GFM president, on 27 February 2005. This meeting in Athens resulted in the creation of UAWO. In its early days, approximately 30 women from Sierra Leone, Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania actively participated in UAWO; at its peak the following years, more than 70 women from even more countries joined.[80] The network of contacts UAWO built and its achievements for women's empowerment are two notable accomplishments. As Macauley pointed out:

> *We started having contacts with activists, organisations and journalists. We could even go to the parliament and speak for our rights. We were not isolated in a closed community anymore. Women were feeling strong discussing, dancing, interacting and fighting together. (…) The undocumented women could find a place in the association that gave them power and they didn't feel the fear I used to feel when I was undocumented.*

Macauley explained that while UAWO is always very open to participating in different activist networks and building alliances with different actors, its members are particularly alert to avoiding any kind of political patronage by other immigrant or Greek organisations. She particularly referred to *'this trick',* as she called it, *'when someone has more knowledge and experience than you have and uses it to divide you'.* This brings us to a milestone in feminist methodologies, valuable for research and activism alike, which is the importance of speaking with, rather than for, marginalised groups (Alcoff, 1991; Gill, 2013). Alcoff notes that the immediate impulse to teach rather than listen to a less privileged speaker is motivated by the 'desire for mastery and domination' (1991). Similarly, Gill gives the example of liberal white feminists speaking on behalf of feminists of colour and cautions that when privileged persons speak on behalf of those who are less privileged, it often reinforces the *status quo.*

[80] At the beginning of the 21st century, more than 5,200 African women were registered as living in Greece (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2001). The real number, including the undocumented African women remains unknown.

In addition, Macauley shed light on issues related to gender asymmetry and patriarchal social relations. As Macauley noted, UAWO often works together with the male-dominated African communities in campaigns and anti-racist events. Further, there were cases that UAWO provided support to African men who approached the organisation asking for help to address their everyday problems in Greece. On the other hand, the creation and functioning of UAWO was not a welcome development for everyone in the African communities. Macauley explained that since the 1980s, African men had had better opportunities to learn Greek, educate themselves and socialise in public spaces compared with African women, who were mostly confined to domestic sphere. Subsequently, some of them didn't like it that African women were organising and having power. As Macauley put it: *'It's this kind of attitude "don't speak, you are a woman". Those who are macho want the women to remain backwards'.*

Based on her work with the anti-racist movement in Athens during the 2000s, Zavos (2012; 2014) underlines that 'sexist and racialized borders [are] often redrawn within the movement' and identifies UAWO as an example of challenging masculinist hierarchies and entitlements, as well as traditional patriarchal social relations (Zavos, 2014: 193). Overall, the story of UAWO attests to the alternative possibilities activism always offers, as opposed to representations of victimhood when women are seen 'firmly fixed into positions of fatalistic and inescapable subordination' (Zavos, 2014: 196). Further, this story brings focus into what Bassel (2015) describes as 'the struggle within the struggle' drawing on Hill Collin's (2000) idea of intersectionality and Madjiguène Cissé (1997), who became the symbol of the struggle of the sans papieres for regularisation and for justice in France in the 1990s.[81] The idea of the 'struggle within the struggle' refers to the everyday political work within multiple structures of

[81] Bassel (2015: 94) provides an illuminating analysis of the role of racial identity in the political mobilisation of undocumented women in France. As she notes the term papieres, with an -es, is the feminine version of papiers.

domination simultaneously challenging gender relations, racial stereotypes and segregation (Bassel, 2015: 106, 108).

Having set the scene, the chapter proceeds with the examination of UAWO's contribution to the struggles of the 'second generation immigrants'. The activist motherhood, in this case, should be located within a broader practice of sisterhood and struggle put forward by UAWO members, ranging from organising their own annual festival to their participation in the solidarity movement to Konstantina Kuneva. In other words, instead of a mono-thematic initiative around children's rights, UAWO was grounded in the lived experiences of African women addressing issues of exploitation, racism and sexism. At the same time, it is true that the struggle for their children's rights was the main issue raised by most of the women who created UAWO in February 2005.

In particular, during the first meetings of UAWO, mothers shared their experiences of fighting from day one of their children's lives, literally 'from the baby's cot', with the bureaucratic machine in order to obtain a birth certificate. The Greek authorities denied their requests and forwarded them to the parents' respective embassies, which, far too often—especially in the case of African countries' embassies—were not functioning or were unwilling to cooperate (Mitralia quoted in Boitard, 2007). Until the initiation of the 'No to racism from the baby's cot' campaign, this was an individual nightmare for every immigrant family. Afterwards, the birth certificates for 'second generation immigrants' became one of the central demands of the campaign.

5.4 'No to Racism from the Baby's Cot'

With the leading role of UAWO, the campaign 'No to racism from the baby's cot' begun with a protest at the end of November 2005. Zavos argues that this initial protest 'presented a significant departure from antiracist protocol':

> The presence of mainly African women migrants and their children, and their leading position in the demonstration, presented a novel sight, since such occasions were usually saturated by the visibility of Greek activists and migrant men.
>
> (Zavos, 2014: 198)

Drawing from Anne McClintock's (1995) formulations on mimicry as a subversive political strategy, Zavos emphasises how mimicry was used in the protest as a form of agency, 'a way in which the disempowered use the tools of their subjection to claim presence':

> The choice of songs, posters, and slogans presented an important shift from the traditional leftist antiracist repertoire, which systematically draws on workerist and/or cultural identity narratives, and provoked impressions ranging from the familiar to the embarrassing. In using symbols from mainstream popular culture, including a Benetton poster, Xmas carols, and the famous John Lennon song, migrant women strategically appropriated and resignified common and evocative, visual and oral narratives and images.
>
> (Zavos, 2014: 199)

Both Zavos (2014) and Zaphiriou-Zarifi (2019) explore UAWO's contribution to the struggle for children's rights by applying the notion of 'acts of citizenship'. As the latter argues, UAWO stands out for 'claiming citizenship rights for non-citizens creatively, performatively and in multiple spaces' (Zaphiriou-Zarifi, 2019: 22). In this context, Zaphiriou-Zarifi suggests that mobilising the mother stereotype was a clever political move:

> Though it may appear to reinforce stereotypes, the women adopted the pre-written scripts according to which they are normally 'read' in Greece in order to subvert such representations. (…) Starting with an issue that was shared by all migrant parents not only provided a solid ground on which to build strategic alliances with other migrant groups, it also invoked a narrative that Greek parents and those sympathetic to children could be moved by. (…) African women were also reminding Greek society that they are more than domestic workers, prostitutes, victims of trafficking and exotic Others.
>
> (Zaphiriou-Zarifi, 2019: 28, 30)

From 2005 to 2009, the campaign 'No to racism from the baby's cot' managed to sustain high energy through its demonstrations, cultural activities, speeches, open discussions, meetings with MPs, grassroots lobbying, and media and social media interventions. A political move that stands out was

the campaign's cooperation with mayors (eg. Municipality of Kaisariani), who were willing to proceed with a symbolic registration of children on the municipality roll and raise awareness of the gaping hole in the country's legislation, which effectively leaves such children with no legal status (UAWO, 2009a; UAWO 2009c). While the battle was still ahead, these public registrations on the municipality roll were a first small victory of the campaign, as well as a breakthrough in the public debate receiving wide publicity even in the conservative press (*Kathimerini*, 2009).

5. Campaign poster. The text reads: 'We return with the demand "No to racism from the baby's cot" [We demand] the issuance of birth certificate and registration in the Municipalities Roll for every immigrant's child born in Greece' (Athens Indymedia, 2006a).

In general, the ability of the campaign to build alliances proved to be strategic for the success of the campaign. UAWO worked closely with a wide range of immigrant and pro-immigrant groups, including the PanHellenic Network of Migrant Women (PNMW), GFM (2006), the Network for the Social Support to Immigrants and Refugees (NSSIR) and immigrant associations (e.g. Albanian, Filipino, Pakistani etc.). Most importantly, the campaign attracted a few 'second-generation

immigrants' and gave them the opportunity to claim their own voice. The interview with Afolayan provided valuable information on this topic. Afolayan was in his mid-twenties when the campaign started and he participated from day one, *'holding the megaphone in the first demonstrations'.* He confirmed the decisive role of UAWO, which he described as *'totally devoted to the cause'*, and emphasised the crucial contribution of the campaign coordinator, Sonia Mitralia, a Greek feminist whose role, according to Afolayan's descriptions, exemplifies the possibility of effective and non-patronising forms of leadership, in terms of coordination and strategic planning.[82]

Afolayan explained that although the 'second-generation immigrants' participated *en masse* in some of the campaign's events, no more than a dozen participated in the organising meetings. Even if the number is small, Afolayan underlined that for those involved, the campaign constituted a space of politicisation, networking and capacity building activities. And according to Macauley, this involvement was a winning element of the campaign. As Afolayan remarked: *'By participating in the campaign and representing it in meetings and public debates, I learnt how to structure and defend my argument's position, how to think and act politically and strategically'.*

Asked about the difficulties of persuading high school students of immigrant origin to engage more actively in the campaign, Afolayan commented:

> *During high school, children are not always conscious of the problem. They don't see themselves as 'second-generation immigrants'. They might hear about the problem and ignore it. Even when they realise it after they finish high school, it is something they want to forget as soon as possible. It is a burden.*

[82] Sonia Mitralia is a feminist activist in Greece, a member of Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt (CADTM) and, after 2010, very active in the Women's Initiative against the Debt and the Austerity Measures.

In their attempt to appeal to the youth of immigrant origin, music proved to be a powerful tool. In that respect, Afolayan drew my attention to the musical concert that took place in the neighbourhood of Kypseli in central Athens in December 2006.

6. The campaign's concert poster. The text reads: 'Birth certificate and registration in the municipality roll for immigrants' children. Equal rights for all the children born or living in Greece' (Athens Indymedia, 2006b).

The poster merits attention. Its different design, compared with the Benetton-style poster in the initial protest of the campaign one year earlier, suggests that it was aspiring to reach a different group of people. The image of the young skateboarder above the word 'racism' is accompanied by the names of bands comprising mainly 'second-generation immigrants' and ranging in genre from hip-hop to dub and reggae. The event was a breakthrough for the campaign, spreading its key messages and establishing a communication channel with 'second-generation immigrants' and youth more broadly.

Afolayan highlighted the participation of Ver.8.et (Vertetet) in the concert, one of the early pioneers in Greece's Albanian hip-hop scene and with a long history of participating in the broader anti-racist

activities.[83] Interestingly, while talking about the struggle for registration on the municipality roll, Afolayan mentioned that his brother, Manolis, a well-known rapper in Greece who goes by the alias 'Mc Yinka', has written about it in one of his songs released in 2009. It appears that rap in Greece, like in so many other countries, gave 'second-generation immigrants' a way to express their personal and collective experiences. Even more, it offered a platform for political communication,[84] and became a 'weapon' in citizenship, anti-racist and anti-fascist struggles.[85] As Afolayan explained, even if they faced the same problem, it was difficult to bring together young people of various origins (Albanian, African, Filipino etc.) and music offered common ground for collaborative action.

On the composition of the campaign participants, Afolayan noted that the most active in the campaign were youth of Albanian origin. Children of Albanian immigrant parents were, by far, the majority of Greece's approximately 200,000 'second-generation immigrants'. As Afolayan added:

> *The Albanians had the most organised immigrant community in Greece. They were at the forefront of the struggles of the second generation. They had several active Albanian collectivities and they were even building an Albanian Federation. And they also had this, you know, they are white, it was always easier for them to move around and do things.*

Based on the aforementioned findings, the chapter brings into the discussion a youth group of Albanian immigrants with an analysis of written content and a focus on their role during and after 'December'.

[83] For example, during October 2004, Ver.8.et participated in a two-day anti-racist festival organised by Youth against Racism in Europe (YRE) and Xekinima—Socialist Internationalist Organisation (Thliverou, 2004).

[84] For further analysis on the topic, the book *Music as a Platform for Political Communication* provides the latest scholarly perspectives on delivering political messages to society through musical platforms and venues (Onyebadi 2017).

[85] While the political side is of primary interest in this research, it is important to note that it is not the only side of rap practice. As Styliou comments in her research on the Albanian hip-hop music scene in Greece: 'It is true that migrants' rap narrative, often takes the form of anger or protest against conditions of racism, inequality and exclusion often experienced in the host countries; or/and of an empowered ethnic identity in conditions of migrancy. However, focusing only on that aspect and treating migrant rappers merely as agents of de facto resistance on the margins of their host society, deprives them of other possible agencies and subjectivities produced in rap practice' (Styliou, 2017: 18).

5.5 ‘These Days Are Ours Too’: The Centre of Albanian Immigrants (CAI) and the December uprising

The Centre of Albanian Immigrants (CAI) was a social and political centre in the neighbourhood of Exarchia, organising a wide range of activities, including open discussions, legal support for immigrants, Albanian language lessons, book launches, film screenings and solidarity parties. The centre started its activities in 2003 and remained open until 2009. As CAI members explain in their statements, those who initiated and later joined the centre were young people, whose political formation took place almost exclusively in Greece and their experiences and memories from Albania were too limited (CAI, 2008a). At the same time, they explained that they never ‘felt comfortable with the Greek Left’ due to ‘a lack of understanding of the radical difference that immigrant experience constitutes’ (Ibid). As they described it, the Greek Left either glorified them or treated them as helpless and incompetent objects (Ibid).

Based on these considerations, the young Albanian immigrants concluded that they needed a space of their own in order to act freely and independently and develop, as they declared ‘our political activism in our own way’, ‘with our “broken” Greek’, ‘outside the forms of the Greek tradition’ and the ‘alien to us local terminology’ (CAI, 2008a). While CAI members were also critical of other immigrant associations operating ‘under the auspices of the Greek Left’, they clearly stated: ‘The things that unite us are more important than our objections which do not prevent joint action around specific objectives and struggles’ (Ibid). This background information is useful to contextualise the initiatives of this group during and after the 2008 December uprising.

On 15 December 2008 —the beginning of the second week of the uprising— the Centre of Albanian Immigrants (CAI) distributed a leaflet at a student protest declaring: ‘These days are ours too...’. The next day, it had already been translated into at least six languages and very soon went viral. It is, indeed, an emblematic statement providing an illuminating view of the December 2008 uprising

through the eyes of a youth group of politically organised Albanian immigrants. As they pointed out: 'For us, the politically organized migrants, this is a second French November of 2005' (CAI, in Schwarz, Sagris and Void Network, 2010: 151).[86] At the same time, they drew attention to immigrant militancy during the 2000s in Greece and dedicated the uprising to the memory of murdered immigrants:

> These days are for the price we have to pay simply in order to exist, to breathe. (…) These days are for the hundreds of migrants and refugees murdered at the borders, in police stations, and workplaces. They are for those murdered by cops or 'concerned citizens' (…) They are for Gramos Palusi, Luan Bertelina, Edison Yahai, Tony Onuoha, Abdurahim Edriz, Modaser Mohamed Ashraf and so many others that we haven't forgotten. (…) They are for the struggles that are not forgotten: in the downs of Volos, the Olympic works, the town of Amaliada. (…) Thanks to Alexis, these days belong to us all. Eighteen years of silent rage are too many. To the streets, for solidarity and dignity![87]
>
> (CAI, in Schwarz, Sagris and Void Network, 2010: 151, 152)

Further, CAI provided a penetrating look at the broader mobilisation of 'second generation immigrants' during 'December':

> The children of migrants mobilise en masse and dynamically, primarily through high school and university actions but also through the organizations of the Left and the far Left. They are the most integrated part of the migrant community, the most courageous. (…) They do not beg for something, they demand to be equal with their Greek class-mates. Equal in rights, on the streets, in dreaming.
>
> (CAI, in Schwarz, Sagris and Void Network, 2010: 151)

According to the Greek Federation of Secondary Education State School Teachers (OLME), the total number of occupied high schools in Greece the second week of the uprising reached 700 and the number of the occupied universities reached 170 (*in.gr,* 2008). On 18 December 2008, more than 10,000 —and among them many 'second generation immigrants'— participated in one of the biggest

[86] This reference to the 2005 immigrant-led uprising in the suburbs of Paris, according to Kornetis, is 'maybe the most direct mentioning of a specific moment in the past that acted as a model and inspiration for those participating in the [December 2008] events' (2011: 1353).

[87] Contributing as far as possible to this memory, Chapter 6 includes details on the murder of Modaser Mohamed Ashraf, Chapter 9 the murder of Edison Yahai, Chapter 10 the struggles in Olympic works and Chapter 11 the rural struggles in the town of Amaliada.

demonstrations of the uprising by high school and university students (Dama, 2008). At the end of this massive rally, the police resorted to violence and Syntagma square became a battlefield.

Some hours later, on the afternoon of the very same day, 40 anti-racist and immigrant organisations called an anti-racist rally at Syntagma Square as part of a pan-European week of action in solidarity with immigrants and refugees at the initiative of the 5th European Social Forum. In this context, the International Day of Solidarity with Migrants —18 December— was re-signified as part of the uprising. The rally was attended by a few hundred immigrants and Greek natives who marched towards the EU offices against the politics of Fortress Europe (Sunday Migrants School, 2008a).[88] The Albanian immigrants, members of CAI, issued their own statement ahead of the anti-racist rally, kept their independence politically and marched together with all the anti-racist and immigrant organisations (CAI, 2008b).

Influential as it was, the CAI's statement on 'December' soon came under scrutiny from state apparatuses, including the counter-terrorism unit. According to media sources, in several meetings of the relevant ministries with the participation of senior police officers, government officials were deeply concerned about the participation of groups of young immigrants in the university occupations during December 2008 and specifically mentioned the statement distributed by CAI on 15 December, while misrepresenting it as anonymous. The government officials were reported as saying that immigration policies should be re-examined in the broader context of public security and order (Agrolambrou, 2009).

[88] Among the main organisers of the anti-racist rally in Greece were 14 immigrant community leaders who had released a common statement on 14 December 2008 declaring: 'We are not looters. Immigrants have public voice and dignity' (Sunday Migrants School, 2008b). Signatories include Macauley, representing UAWO, and the coordinator of the Cretan Forum of Immigrants (CFI). Some anarchist groups have criticised the signatories for distancing themselves from riots and looting, and Ta Paidia Tis Galarias went so far as to call the immigrant community leaders 'capitalist mediators' (Ta Paidia Tis Galarias, 2009).

In a public statement, the CAI expressed indignation at the government's leaks and media representations of immigrant participation in the December uprising (CAI, 2009a). In their reply, the politically organised Albanian immigrants stated that labelling dissent as 'terrorism' aimed at discouraging organised active political engagement of immigrants and refugees. As the group explained, someone who is suspected of engaging in terrorist activities would never obtain a residence permit or be granted citizenship even if they met the requirements. In the CAI's view, the state tried to distract attention from the struggles of the 'second generation' and throw their demands into the metaphorical dustbin (CAI, 2009a).

CAI, UAWO and other immigrant associations took several initiatives during 2009 building on the legacy of 'December'. For instance, in February 2009, the CAI (2009b) organised a three-day event that included a presentation of the 'No to racism from the baby's cot' campaign, a live hip-hop concert (including Ver.8.et) and a documentary on the 'second generation'.[89] In June 2009, as part of the second three-day festival of solidarity and culture, UAWO (2009b) organised a discussion on the movement for the right to Greek citizenship featuring three UAWO members from Seychelles, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, a member of the Unity of Filipino Migrant Workers in Greece (KASAPI Hellas) youth and a member of the CAI. One month later, UAWO, CAI, Youth against Racism in Europe (YRE), KASAPI Hellas, and others discussed on the same topic at the 14th Annual Antiracist Festival (Antiracist Festival, 2009).

To sum up, even if the emphasis in the previous analysis was more focused on actors and protests that put forward specific demands during and after 'December', the spontaneous outburst had its own rhythm. Clearly, the student protests of 'December' did not comprise ideologically homogeneous

[89] The documentary (Guerilla Cinematography, 2009) was based on a project by the NGO Amaka and was a co-production with Guerrilla Cinematography, SaveFrag Productions and a group of five young 'second-generation immigrants' living in Athens (including Mc Yinka). Available with English subtitles at: https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xf4t2o (Accessed: 7 September 2020).

actors. Generally, processes of politicisation and identity formation, especially in youth, are far more complicated. From this point of view, As Kalyvas insightfully comments:

> The immigrants did not join the protests as a particular identity with fixed objectives, as bearers of their 'ethnic', 'religious' or 'national' identities, but appeared on a common stage with others to take a position in the political sphere about a public wrong and for a generalizable interest that exceed[ed] their own individuality and finality.
>
> (Kalyvas, 2010: 356)

In this context, the outburst created a more general and anti-systemic demand for social justice and change. As Afolayan summarised it in our interview: *'The murder of Alexis was a moment when you felt that the city would be demolished, there was this feeling, you know, that we were turning the page, that justice would be delivered'.*

5.6 The Legacy of 'December' v. *Jus sanguinis:* The New Citizenship Law, the Judicial Intervention, and a Hypothetical Question

A crucial question to be addressed based on the above is whether the legacy of 'December' could potentially bring more 'second-generation immigrants' into the movement for the right to Greek citizenship. Before elaborating on the level and forms of participation, it is necessary to carefully consider the political and legal developments regarding the right to Greek citizenship. In particular, after the governmental change in 2009, the PASOK government put forward the new Citizenship Law (3838/2010) which introduced elements of *jus soli* into Greek legislation facilitating citizenship acquisition.[90] Further, the new Citizenship Law constituted third country nationals' right to vote in local elections (Mavrommatis, 2017; Triandafyllidou, 2015). For many scholars and activists, the

[90] For the full bill, see: Government Gazette of Greece (2010), available at: http://www.red-network.eu/resources/toolip/doc/2012/11/23/greek-citizenship-law-n-38382010.pdf (Accessed: 7 September 2020).

citizenship reform bill was a victory, or at least, a first positive step that paved the way for immigrant children born or schooled in Greece to acquire Greek citizenship.

On the other hand, many of the collectivities participating in the 'No to racism from the baby's cot' campaign have criticised the citizenship reform bill, mainly pointing out the costly process for those applying for Greek citizenship, the new divisions it introduced and the assimilationist strategy it was based on (*Eleftherotypia*, 2009). In a similar vein, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) argued that the naturalisation process was based on arbitrary criteria that introduced a contemporary version of the old 'certificates of social convictions' (*Rizospastis,* 2010b: 2). While there were serious reasons for a left-wing and anti-racist critique along these lines, the reform was mostly challenged from a right-wing and far-right perspective both inside and outside Parliament.

In this context, an Athens attorney filed before the Council of State asking for the revocation of certain provisions of the law. On 1 February 2011, the 4th Chamber of the Council of State (Decision No. 350/2011) questioned the constitutionality of Law 3838/2010 concerning third country nationals' right to vote in local elections and the automatic *ex lege* acquisition of Greek citizenship by the second generation of immigrant origins (Christopoulos, 2013a; 2013b; Red network, 2013). In February 2013, the judgement of the Plenary Session of the Greek Council of State (Decision No. 460/2013) confirmed the finding of unconstitutionality with a strong minority vote (13 members versus 26).

As Clio Papapantoleon, former president of the Hellenic League for Human Rights (HLHR), explains, the Council of State invested the 'law of blood' (*jus sanguinis*) with the status of a constitutional principle, claiming that its violation leads to the 'degeneration of the nation' (Papapantoleon, 2013). Christopoulos (2013b) notes that the decision has been heavily and justly criticised by a great number of jurists as a far right wing ideological-political manifesto rather than a judicial text. In line with these critical insights, I argue that bringing the case before the Council of State complied with a xenophobic

campaign with the aim to transform public debate demonstrates a type of 'strategic litigation against immigrant rights'.

7. Protest by immigrant and antiracist organisations at Syntagma Square demanding access to citizenship for all the children, 30 March 2013 (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2019).

Of course, the 'second generation immigrants' and the broader anti-racist movement did not remain silent in the light of new legal developments (*Kathimerini*, 2013). Youth magazines (e.g. the 'Assante' organisation),[91] cultural centres (e.g. the 'Anasa' cultural centre of African art),[92] and human rights organisations (e.g. Generation 2.0 RED),[93] all created the period between 2008 and 2013, significantly

[91] The 'Asante' organisation started publishing a youth magazine in Greek in 2008. 'Asante' means 'thank you' in Swahili

[92] Michael Afolayan and his brother Manolis were among the founding members of the cultural centre of African art 'Anasa', which opened in 2010. 'Anasa' means 'breath' in Greek and 'happiness' in Swahili. For more information see Anasa (n.d.), available at: http://www.anasa.org.gr/about-us/ (Accessed: 9 August 2020).

[93] In 2013, the Institute for Rights, Equality & Diversity (i-RED) joined forces with Second Generation, an informal group operating since 2006, and founded the human rights organisation Generation 2.0 RED. For more information see Generation 2.0 RED (n.d.), available at: https://g2red.org (Accessed: 6 September 2020).

contributed to activist responses in view of the judgment of the Greek Council of State. Further, members from the campaign 'No to Racism from the Baby's Cot'[94] worked together with the 'Theatre of the Oppressed' activist group and staged a theatrical play raising awareness of non-citizenship and demonstrating once again the role of culture as a weapon in the struggle.[95]

However, without underestimating the considerable efforts of a few organisations, it appears that the movement as a whole was unable to rise to the occasion. Of course, there are no easy explanations and the general constraints and difficulties of the period of crisis should be carefully considered. At the same time, pointing to to hidden potentialities of the movement, there is a hypothetical question of what could have happened if it proved possible to translate the legacy of December 2008 uprising into a movement of 'second-generation immigrants' demanding Greek citizenship 'here and now'. To put it another way, how different could have been the aforementioned political and legal battles in 2013 if the youth took to the streets *en masse* and dynamically, as it did in 'December'? I suggest that the following two aspects contribute to a deeper understanding of both difficulties and hidden potentialities of the movement for the right to Greek citizenship.

First, there is a growing body of scholarship highlighting that children of immigrants can negotiate their identities and sense of belonging in many different ways (Nibbs and Brettell, 2016). The findings of my study confirmed that the 'hybrid' identity lying behind the term 'second generation immigrant' has serious implications for collective action. To cite an example, Afolayan repeatedly emphasised in our interview that being a 'second-generation migrant' is a burden. On the other hand, in moments this identity was connected to political and cultural processes, it appeared to be a source of pride. As Afolayan stated:

> *After so many years being rejected as Greek, I feel proud I am a second-generation immigrant. (…) I was schooled here, I love this place, but this country never accepted me as citizen. I*

[94] Both Afolayan and Macauley participated in this theatrical performance.
[95] Working with the 'Theatre of the oppressed' activist group, UAWO also presented a performance on human trafficking.

> *cannot come to terms with that. (…) It's not their recognition that matters. We were born here, we live here and we want equal rights. This is what matters. (…) Until now, I don't have the right to vote.*

Afolayan considered the processes of identity formation to be open-ended.[96] It appears that in their everyday realities, the children of immigrants mostly feel this identity (1.5, second or third generation) as imposed on them to deprive them of their rights. On the other hand, when connected to the movement, publicly self-identifying as 'non-status' youth of immigrant origin appears to be a declaration that is generative of a political subjectivity (Nyers, 2010: 129).

The second aspect to consider is that many 'second generation immigrants' were active in the student movement and the organisations of the Left and the far Left. With this in mind, it is quite a paradox that the issue of the right to Greek citizenship for all youth never became a priority for the student movement. Afolayan noted in our interview that, perhaps, *'as soon as they ['second generation immigrants'] enter the university, they temporarily feel a relief from this burden of non-citizenship, they have the residence permit and they just want to be like everybody else'.* Even if this is by large true for 'second generation immigrants' who are not politically active, I assume it is insufficient to explain the case of student activists of immigrant origin. How can a politically organised student ever forget that s/he is deprived of her political rights?

Based on self-critical reflections on my participation in the student movement in Greece during the 2000s, I am wondering if student activists of immigrant origin ever felt comfortable enough to share their experiences or raise the burden of non-citizenship as a problem to be collectively addressed. Perhaps, some student collectivities might have been more alert than others and student activists might have individually contributed to the campaign 'No to racism from the baby's cot'. However, when hundreds of thousands of 'second-generation immigrants' were deprived of their rights due to the

[96] For example, the last decade, Afolayan became more active in the Nigerian community of Greece and he now serves as its general secretary.

restrictive citizenship regime, the student movement as a whole failed to rise to the occasion and play a leading role in this struggle.

On the other hand, the student movement in Greece has a long tradition of resistance, with the different tendencies of the Left having a strong presence in the student unions. In this context, the student Left has often actively supported immigrant struggles for rights and significantly contributed to the anti-racist and the anti-fascist movement. Thus, asking what could have happened if the students took to the streets to defend the right to Greek citizenship is not only related to missed opportunities and alternative history. Instead, pointing to shortcomings and suggesting a deeper understanding of the radical difference that the immigrant experience constitutes (CAI 2008a), in a way, prefigures possible challenges from the future.[97]

5.7 Summary

This chapter explored the implications of non-citizenship for 'second-generation immigrants' during the 2000s and brought focus into activist responses before, during and after the December 2008 uprising. The research findings illustrate that, under certain circumstances, struggling for the right to citizenship can trigger creative and radical enactments that challenge the existing social and political order and constitute an act of citizenship. As opposed to legal nihilist ideas, widespread in the autonomist milieu, the chapter shows that rejecting the very idea of citizenship fails to address the impact of non-citizenship 'here and now' and misses processes of politicisation and actual spaces of resistance in the context of citizenship struggles.

[97] While not addressed in this research, the next turning point related to the right to Greek citizenship came in 2015, after the government change, when SYRIZA introduced a new Citizenship Law (4332/2015). This was a soft version of the 2010 law, a compromise that took into account the Council of State's former ruling (Mavrommatis, 2017). Afolayan has been invited to the parliament's consultation with the civil society before the voting of the law. During the interview, shortly after the Parliamentary elections in July 2019, Afolayan was once again concerned about the right to Greek citizenship for 'second generation immigrants' in view of the government change.

The research findings revealed how African women, members of UAWO, skilfully led the ‘No to racism from the baby’s cot’ campaign and contributed to building alliances, as part of the broader practice of sisterhood and struggle that UAWO embodied after its creation in 2005. Further, as the stories narrated in this chapter show, ‘second generation immigrants’ found ways to claim their own voice, even though only a few engaged actively with the campaign. In so doing, protests, public discussions, documentaries, theatrical performances and music—especially rap—offered a platform for expression, communication and activist engagement. Overall, the chapter demonstrated the campaign’s resourcefulness in expanding communication skills and transforming the public debate.

Turning to ‘December’, the role of an active political group of young Albanian immigrants was specifically examined based on the analysis of written content. The chapter explained why CAI’s statement on the uprising was emblematic in terms of its content and virality, as well as the state and media responses it triggered. Similar to the Invisible Committee, the CAI members referred to the ‘French November’ of 2005 as a source of inspiration. On the other hand, unlike the Invisible Committee, research shows that the politically organised Albanian immigrants in Athens did not share the call to abandon the politics of demand altogether and, in fact, the CAI significantly contributed to the movement for the right to Greek citizenship.

Further, special emphasis was placed on the difficulties of the movement for the right to Greek citizenship to sustain high energy the years after December and meet the new challenges related to the judicial intervention of the Council of State in 2013 that suspended the government reform of 2010. Finally, the chapter drew attention to the ‘hybrid’ identity behind the term ‘second generation immigrant’ and highlighted its implications for collective action. Considering that the struggles for the rights of the children of immigrants in Greece are still on-going, it pointed to hidden potentialities and argued for a more organic relation between the citizenship struggles and the student movement, which is traditionally the backbone of the broader youth movement in Greece.

Chapter 6: Dirty Secrets. The 2005 Abduction Scandal, an Extradition Request and the 'Other 6 December'

6.1 Introduction

On 6 December 2008, just a few hours before the murder of Alexis Grigoropoulos, the Committee against the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum (CEPIA)[98] issued a statement denouncing the fact that police had once again resorted to violence outside the Aliens Directorate of Athens that morning. As a result of the violence, Mazhar Iqbal, an asylum seeker from Pakistan, was fighting for his life at Nikaia General Hospital (CEPIA, 2008a). Iqbal's story was overshadowed by the murder of Alexis Grigoropoulos and was scarcely reported in the media and social movement documents. One remarkable exception is *Ergatiki Allilegii* (Workers' Solidarity), a weekly newspaper published by the Socialist Worker's Party (SEK).[99] On 7 December 2008, a special edition of that newspaper published on its front page a large picture of the injured asylum seeker with the headlines 'Down with the government of the murderers. A 16-year-old was murdered in cold blood by a policeman. An immigrant is fighting for his life, beaten at the Aliens' Directorate'.

Three demonstrations were subsequently announced on the newspaper's front page (8/12, 10/12 and 20/12). The third was an anti-racist demonstration, which had been planned before the events of 6 December. In fact, hundreds of smaller and larger protests took place between 6 and 20 December.

[98] CEPIA was created on 13 November 2008 with the aim of contributing to the struggle against the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, and more generally as an initiative for immigrant rights. The main forces behind the CEPIA were the Greek Socialist Workers' Party (SEK), Unity and the Afghan Community. The CEPIA can be identified as the forerunner of the Movement United Against Racism and the Fascist Threat (KEERFA).

[99] SEK is an organisation of the extra-parliamentary Left in Greece, an affiliate of the International Socialist Tendency (IST) and a sister organisation of the British Socialist Worker Party (SWP). SEK participates in ANTARSYA.

8. Front page of *Ergatiki Allilegii*, 7 December 2008 (Ragkos, 2008).

Indeed, this two-week period felt like a decade. In this context, the 20 December anti-racist demonstration, as was also the case with the 18 December anti-racist demonstration, allowed immigrants to take to the streets together with their associations, expressing 'rage against racist crimes', as CEPIA (2008b) described.

Pakistani immigrants attending the rally held picture of Mazhar Iqbal and a banner that read 'Down with the murderers of immigrants and students'. The protesters marched in Stadiou Street, which leads to Syntagma Square. At the head of the demonstration were two immigrants from Pakistan and Iraq in orange jumpsuits, highlighting in a performative and imaginative way that the atrocities committed against immigrants in Greece resembled the situation at Guantanamo Bay (CEPIA, 2008b). The general spirit of the uprising is eloquently captured in the fact that when the demonstration arrived at Syntagma Square, the police used pepper spray on the protesters while clashing with hundreds of

mainly fine arts students who had called for a parallel 'Christmas tree protest', throwing rubbish and hanging bin bags from the branches of the city's central Christmas tree (Nellas, 2008).[100]

Among the speakers who addressed the rally[101] was the president of the Pakistani Community of Greece Unity (hereafter 'Pakistani Community'), Javed Aslam, who honoured the memories of Grigoropoulos and Ashraf and denounced police brutality particularly noting the case of Iqbal who was fighting for his life at Nikaia General Hospital. Iqbal fell into a coma and, as CEPIA declared in March 2009, 'Mazhar Iqbal died 116 days after Alexis' (CEPIA, 2009b).

6.2 The 'bloody weekends' outside the Aliens Directorate of Athens and the Demonstration of Rage against Racist Crimes in October 2008

The weekend of 6-7 December 2008 was not the first or the last 'bloody weekend' outside the Aliens Directorate of Athens. As 10 organisations explained in their joint press release in October 2008, the Asylum Department of the Aliens' Directorate of Athens was adopting and implementing policies that constituted a flagrant violation of the fundamental right of asylum seekers to have access to the asylum procedure (GLRMR *et al.*, 2008).[102] During the autumn of 2008 the previous policy of accepting only a very limited number of asylum applications was replaced by a complete suspension of the process of accepting new asylum applications. As a result, during the weekend of 25–26 October, after having been barred from the asylum process for two months, an unprecedented number of asylum seekers (around 3,000) queued up outside the building of the Aliens' Directorate at Petrou Ralli Street in order

[100] This was not the first time the city-sponsored Christmas tree had been attacked —it was even set on fire during the first days of the uprising, achieving what Dalakoglou (2013: 29) calls a 'symbolic and physical victory in the ongoing struggle over Syntagma's meanings'.
[101] Other speakers included the lawyer Kostas Papadakis, representatives of the Stop the War Coalition (StWC), a student representative of the co-ordination of the general assemblies of the student unions and a popular actor. The mayor of the municipality of Rendi also sent a written greeting.
[102] The joint press release was issued by 10 organisations, including NGOs, grassroots solidarity initiatives and legal aid teams. One of these organisations is the Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees (GLRMR).

to hand in their asylum applications (GLRMR *et al.*, 2008). The response of the police was to resort to violence in order to repel the crowd (Ibid).

During these events, twenty-nine-year-old Montaser Mohammed Ashraf from Pakistan was found dead in a ditch around 400 metres from the gate of the Aliens Directorate. According to the police statement, the immigrant 'was with his family and approached the ditch to relieve himself but slipped and fell'. The police added that his death was not related to the 'minor incidents that took place earlier that day when three people were injured' (quoted in *Kathimerini*, 2008). However, the Pakistani Community of Greece Unity and the Stop the War Coalition (StWC)[103] clearly stated that Ashraf was murdered by the police. As they described, panic broke out after the police resorted to violence against the immigrants —more than 15 migrants were severely injured— and Ashraf fell into the ditch while being pursued by police officers (Unity and StWC, 2008a).

The two organisations demanded the resignation of the Minister of Interior and Public Order as well as a thorough investigation, denouncing 'the shameful police statement' and 'the racist government policy' according to which 'refugees are claiming asylum and receive death' (Unity and StWC, 2008a). Some days later, the Pakistani Community and the StWC called for an anti-racist assembly. Thousands of Pakistanis publicly held Janazah funeral prayers at this event in front of Ashraf's coffin outside Athens Town Hall and participated in what the organisers described as a 'demonstration of rage against racist crimes' (Unity and StWC, 2008b).

The murders of Mohammed Ashraf and Mazhar Iqbal and the mobilisations of the Pakistani immigrants shed more light on the situation immigrants were facing before and during 'December', as well as their militant responses. With the aim to further elaborate on the links between these responses and immigrant militancy during the 2000s I now turn to the history of the Pakistani Community. The

[103] The StWC was founded in 2002, inspired by the London anti-war demonstrations, at the initiative of SEK.

chapter specifically demonstrates how unexpected challenges during 2005–07 led the Pakistani Community to reorganise its activities and form an alliance with the Greek Left —and more closely with StWC and SEK— in order to address them.

I had the opportunity to discuss the above with Javed Aslam, the president of Pakistani Community. I was introduced to him by the national director of Movement United against Racism and the Fascist Threat (KEERFA). We met at the Unity central office opposite the Athens Town Hall at the end of summer 2019. My interview preparation included researching Javed Aslam's frequent interventions in the Greek and international media (e.g., BBC, *The Guardian* and Al Jazeera), as well as an extensive research into the weekly newspaper *Ergatiki Allilegii* and the written production of Pakistani Community.

6.3 The Pakistani Community of Greece Unity and its President, Javed Aslam

Pakistani immigrants have been arriving in small numbers in Greece since the 1970s according to bilateral treaties between the two countries. Back then, they were mostly employed as sailors and workers in the shipyards of Skaramangas (Leghari, 2009).[104] During the 1990s and even more so during the 2000s, an increasing number of young and male Pakistani workers arrived in Greece. According to the official data, the Pakistani immigrants living in Greece were 11,192 in 2001 and more than 34,000 in 2011. However, the real numbers, including the unregistered Pakistani immigrants, are estimated to be around 50,000–100,000 during the 2000s (Leghari, 2009; Maroufof and Kouki, 2017).[105]

[104] It is remarkable that Pakistani workers participated in the first strike recorded in the chronicle after the fall of dictatorship in Greece in 1974, at the National Can factory, as a result of a worker's dismissal. After a general union's gathering, Greek and Pakistani workers went on strike, claiming the re-employment of their colleague (Serdedakis, 2007).

[105] Aslam estimated that at the time of our interview in 2019, no more than 50,000 Pakistanis were residing in Greece.

Javed Aslam arrived in Greece in 1996, when he was in his late twenties. He is educated with a degree in political science from the University of the Punjab. During his graduation, he was reading Socrates, Aristotle and Plato and aspired to move to Greece and continue his studies in law. While he did not fulfil his plan to study law at a Greek University due to several difficulties, Aslam moved to Athens and decided to stay for some years in Greece. He initially worked in a plastic factory and, as soon as he achieved basic knowledge of the Greek language, managed to take a second job as an interpreter in the Labour Employment Office (OAED). Motivated by his orientation towards advocacy and seeing that many Pakistani immigrants were often asking for his help due to his educational background, in 2001, he set up an office in collaboration with a Greek lawyer to offer legal advice and support on a voluntary basis. This office became a reference point for many Pakistani immigrants who were struggling with bureaucratic processes related to their legal status.

The Pakistani Community of Greece Unity was established in 2000. Its main purpose was to provide a platform to solve problems, such as the difficulties the Pakistani community faced to send their dead back to their homeland (Leghari, 2009: 7). Aslam was not directly involved in the association until he attended the general assembly of the Pakistani Community before its 2002 presidential elections. He found that the electoral process had been depoliticised and openly expressed his disagreement with this approach:

> *I stood up in the assembly and told them: you are an association. When you want to do something, you must have a plan how to do it. You should say I am a candidate for that or the other reason, not just because I don't want to let the others win. What's your programme?*

A group of Pakistani immigrants who shared his views suggested that he run for president. Initially, Aslam had no intention of assuming leadership because he planned to return to Pakistan relatively soon. He also thought that the presidency implied responsibilities that required time and commitment, and he was already committed to the time-consuming project of his legal office. However, pressure from others made him change his mind and his active involvement gradually developed the idea that the Pakistani Community could function as a real platform to solve problems.

6.4 'Justice for the Abducted Pakistani Immigrants'

The presidential elections took place every three years and the participation was remarkable. All the Pakistani immigrants who were living in Greece could join the Pakistani Community and vote in the elections regardless of their legal status. According to data Aslam provided, the total votes from Pakistani immigrants in the 2002 elections were around 8,000, and in 2005 they rose to 12,000. The leadership question was far from monolithic, and internal debates or accusations of electoral rigging were commonplace (Leghari, 2009; Mufti, 2012). The first time Aslam ran as a presidential candidate in 2002, he was not elected, but in the 2005 elections, he won with more than 50% of the total votes.

Shortly after his election, the Pakistani Community had to deal with an unprecedented situation. Some weeks after the 7 July 2005 suicide bomb attacks in London, 28 Pakistani immigrants were abducted from their homes in Athens and the city of Ioannina in north-west Greece. The men were falsely suspected of terrorist activities. Their abductors presented police IDs, but no arrest warrants. According to the abductees, they were kept in 'secret prisons', some for 48 hours and some for as long as one week, and were ill-treated and interrogated about their UK connections by the Greek police and secret agents, some with British accents.

Throughout that period, their friends, relatives, employers and lawyers, along with the Pakistani Community leadership, were trying to find them. The Greek authorities claimed they had no information about them. Upon their release —some of them near Omonoia square in central Athens— they were blindfolded and instructed not to remove the blindfolds for five minutes. As one reported that he was told by one of his abductors, 'If you ever mention this thing to anyone at all, or say where you were taken to, or talk to television, radio or newspapers, then we will catch you and bring you in again and trust me, we will kill you. We will slit your throats'. Another one said the barrel of a gun was put into his mouth as his captors threatened him (*BBC News,* 2006b; Amnesty International, 2007; *Rizospastis,* 2005d: 3; Carassava, 2005).

Some of the abducted immigrants met with the leadership of the Pakistani Community and discussed how they should deal with what had happened. Seven of the abducted immigrants agreed with Javed Aslam to initiate a justice campaign with the support of the Pakistani Community. Subsequently, on 29 July 2005 Aslam filed a formal complaint on behalf of the seven and publicly denounced the human rights violations that had occurred (*Rizospastis,* 2005d: 3). As a result of these initiatives, more Pakistani nationals came forward and claimed they had also been abducted and treated in the same way. The stakes were really high considering that their allegations brought them into conflict with Greek, British and Pakistani authorities.

In this context, Aslam contacted the StWC and SEK during the summer of 2005. While he was always rather sympathetic to the Left, that was the first time he came into contact and worked closely with a Left party. As he described in our interview:

> *We are thankful to all the Left that stood in solidarity. Especially with SEK, we were working closely in a daily basis. (…) We learnt from the Greek Left many things that contributed to our organizational capacities, such as how to organise a successful press conference. (…) This contact with the Greek Left gave us strength and courage.*

During September 2005, the Pakistani Community joined the StWC in anti-government demonstrations during the Thessaloniki International Fair, with a banner reading 'Stop the Iraqi occupation. Stop the abductions. No to Islamophobia'. The following months, KKE and SYRIZA took various separate initiatives to bring the issue to the Greek and the European Parliaments, asking for explanations and demanding full elucidation of the abduction cases. The KKE newspaper *Rizospastis* related the case of the abductions to the European Council Act of 29 May 2000 on 'Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters between the Member States of the European Union' (2000/C 197/01 - European Union, 2000) which allowed joint investigative teams to be established between different Member States and their covert operations (Bogiopoulos and Milakas, 2005: 7).

At the end of 2005, the abductions became an international scandal. A Greek newspaper published the name of a British spy chief and 15 Greek agents allegedly involved in the operation. The British government described allegations as 'utter nonsense' and 'farfetched' and forbade the British media from naming the British spy chief (*BBC News*, 2005). The Greek Minister of Public Order at the time, George Voulgarakis, acknowledged that Greek security services had checked more than 5,000 foreigners after the British government asked all EU countries to assist with the investigation into the London suicide bombers who killed 52 people in July 2005, but insisted that 'secret agreements and protocols did not exist' and that 'everything was done legally' (*BBC News*, 2006a). While both governments denied any kind of involvement in the scandal, the prosecutor for the Supreme Civil and Criminal Court of Greece ('Areios Pagos' in Greek) announced that there were grounds for proceeding with the investigation (Amnesty International 2007).

9. Press Conference with the participation of the abducted Pakistanis and representatives of the solidarity campaign in January 2006 (Verde, 2015).

Realising their momentum, Pakistani Community and StWC, with the support of the Centre of Athens Labour Unions (EKA), organised a press conference just after New Year's Eve 2005 that attracted

international press attention. The abductees had the opportunity to share their stories in public and denounced threats they had received from the Pakistani Embassy warning them not to speak up.[106] Pakistani and Greek representatives of the solidarity campaign decried the attempts at a cover-up by the right-wing government of New Democracy (*Socialist Worker*, 2006). As Georgios-Alexandros Mangakis, a political prisoner during the Greek junta and an ex-minister of justice (1982-1986) who participated in the press conference, told journalists:

> This case is a blatant violation of every human right and of political liberties. The interrogation of the 28 immigrants from Pakistan was totally illegal. (…) These are the results of Tony Blair's and George Bush's illegal war and the occupation of Iraq. The only hope is the popular mobilisation against the war and in defence of civil rights.
>
> (*Socialist Worker*, 2006)

In the weeks after the press conference, several demonstrations were organised in Greece to demand justice for the 28 abductees. In May, the new Minister of Public Order, Vyron Polydoras, tried to ridicule the allegations, stating that 'kidnapping each other is the favourite sport for Pakistanis in Greece' (Polydoras in Hellenic Parliament, 2006). Meanwhile, the Supreme Court prosecutor announced the conclusions of an inquiry he launched into the allegations at the start of the year. According to a BBC article: 'He [the prosecutor] recommended charges against at least two Greek officers but allegations of British MI6 involvement are unlikely to be pursued due to diplomatic immunity' (*BBC News*, 2006c). This was a major legal achievement for the campaign, 'the best possible development', according to Frangiskos Ragoussis, one of the lawyers representing the Pakistani Community. As he added: 'The charges confirm that the criminal act of abduction was committed. The way has opened for us to bring all these despicable people to justice' (*BBC News*, 2006c).

[106] Aslam added in our interview that the Pakistani Embassy offered money to the victims in exchange for them withdrawing their accusations.

As a result of these developments, the Greek government felt considerable pressure from its opponents both inside and outside Parliament. In mid-June 2006, the opposition parties lodged two different proposals, both calling for the establishment of a parliamentary committee to investigate the abductions. PASOK and SYRIZA jointly stated that 'the alleged kidnapping and questioning of the Pakistanis constituted a breach of fundamental human rights'. KKE lodged its own proposal highlighting that both PASOK and New Democracy had encouraged the breach of human rights (*Kathimerini,* 2006). Both proposals for the establishment of a parliamentary committee to investigate the abductions were rejected by the majority of MPs during a plenary session of parliament. The following excerpt from the speech of the Minister of Public Order is illuminating with regard to the government's response: 'Pakistanis will not regulate the function of the Greek Republic' (Polydoras in *in.gr,* 2006a).

6.5 'Freedom for Javed Aslam'

In September 2006, Aslam met with Tariq Ali, who was visiting Greece for a book launch. The British-Pakistani intellectual and leading figure of the international Left was impressed by Aslam's independence and courage, congratulated him for speaking up in defence of the abducted and warned him that 'even hell is less furious than a humiliated bureaucracy' (Ali, 2006). The warning proved insightful. Two months later, on 6 November 2006, Aslam was arrested on the basis of an Interpol warrant originating in Pakistan, issued on 2 September 2006, according to which he was charged with 'illegal migration and smuggling of human beings' (Amnesty International, 2007).

This was a turning point for the campaign. All the political and social forces that were actively engaged with the abductions case publicly stated without hesitation that this extradition request was based on false charges and represented an act of revenge against the president of Pakistani Community by the

military regime governing Pakistan at that time.[107] Their central demand at the new phase of the campaign was to free Aslam, who was detained in Athens' Korydallos Prison. The main distinctive features of the campaign are best illustrated by the following highlights:

12 November: Pakistani immigrants taking to Athens streets in show of strength

In order to meet new challenges and enact maximum pressure in solidarity with their community leader, the Pakistani Community mobilised Pakistani immigrants and worked closely with the Greek Left. Some days after the arrest, several hundred Pakistanis ―thousands, according to some estimations― from all over Athens marched carrying placards reading 'Arrest of Javed Aslam, 100% political issue', 'Punishment for those responsible for the abductions', 'Greece is collaborating with the junta of Pakistan' and 'Hands off Javed Aslam. Mr. Ambassador, Go!'. The main banner in Urdu, Greek and English was reading 'Freedom to Javed Aslam'.[108] While the rally was co-organised with the StWC, it is noteworthy that the presence of Greek protesters was scarce.

17 November: Evoking the past, aligning with the issues of the present

On 17 November 2006, a smaller group of Pakistanis and the same banner in Urdu, Greek and English appeared alongside StWC, SEK and other organisations of the extra-parliamentary Left,[109] at the annual massive anti-imperialist rally in honour of the 1973 Polytechnic uprising against the military

[107] It is indicative that the president of SYRIZA's parliamentary group called the case of Aslam a contemporary 'Dreyfus affair' evoking memories of the decade-long scandal in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in France (Alavanos, 2007).

[108] For this demonstration's footage see Associated Press Archive (2006), available at: http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/2168a95b1648471690a8d15cbf4fdfb7 (Accessed: 7 August 2020).

[109] Many of these organisations took the initiative to create the Solidarity Initiative to Javed Aslam against the Terrorist Pogroms and the Abductions of Migrants. StWC and SEK did not participate in this initiative, but coordinated their activities in the protests and other aspects of the campaign.

Junta in Greece (1967-1974) (*Ergatiki Allilegii,* 2006a). The Pakistani Community related the commemoration day to their own struggle against Musharraf, the military officer who took power through a coup in 1999 and was still ruling Pakistan at the time. Further, the arrest of Aslam awakened memories from the Greek past and many were those who related the campaign for Aslam to the historical tradition of resistance in Greece. Indicative of this was a joint highly symbolic statement by Glezos, Mangakis, Machairas and Linaios denouncing the criminalisation of Aslam's activities:

> We will not allow our country to become Guantanamo (…) The willingness of the Greek government to implement the arrest warrant issued by the junta of Pakistan aiming at Aslam's forced return causes indignation to all those who resisted in the past similar plots by the junta in Greece.
>
> (Glezos *et al.* quoted in *in.gr,* 2006b)

Released after 18 days: The role of international solidarity, the wide support in Greece and the first victory

SEK played a crucial role in spreading the message at anti-war and anti-imperialist international meetings. An international petition was organised, with the letter of support stating that 'it was only thanks to the courage of Javed Aslam that the anti-war movement in Greece was able to disclose the scandal of the abductions'. Signatories of the letter ranged from the ex-president of Algeria, Ben Bella, to intellectuals such as Samir Amin and Mike Davis and anti-war activists such as Salma Yaqoob to trade unionists, MPs and political representatives from Latin America and the Middle East (ESSF, 2006). Tariq Ali published a letter in the Greek media condemning the arrest as 'political persecution' and expressing his hope that 'the democratic society in Greece will raise its voice against this scandalous act' (Ali, 2006).

10. A big hug for Javed Aslam while he exits Korydallos Prison in November 2006 (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2006).

In Greece, apart from the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary Left, Aslam was supported by the wider political, social, trade unionist and human rights spectrum, including PASOK, the GSEE and various human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International.[110] The first victory of the campaign came when Aslam was released after 18 days of detention on a €30,000 bail (Thoidou, 2006). This was posted by the GSEE in a very rare act of solidarity, a remarkable exception to the routine practices of union bureaucracy over the following years.

[110] In January, Amnesty International released a detailed report on the case of Aslam. Among others, the organisation stated: 'Should Javed Aslam be deported to Pakistan, Amnesty International is concerned that the Pakistani nationals he has represented would be left without a public voice' (Amnesty International, 2007: 1).

23 December 2006: The people's verdict

11. 'People's court' organised by the Pakistani Community in Nikaia, 23 December 2006 (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2006)

The most imaginative political move of the Pakistani Community in the third phase of the campaign after Aslam's release was to organise what they called a 'people's court' with the aim 'to uncover the plot by the Pakistani ambassador against Aslam and the Pakistani Community' (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2006b). The event took place in the neighbourhood of Nikaia in the southwestern part of Athens and was attended by approximately 2,000 Pakistanis. Representatives from several Pakistani communities across Europe were invited, and many attended the event, which was also broadcast by a London-based television network popular in the Pakistani diaspora (Ibid).

Dozens of immigrants formed a long queue and engaged in long discussions about the new challenges the Pakistani Community had to face. Among those who took the podium were three of the abductees, who shared their stories in detail. The speakers also denounced the Pakistani Embassy in Greece for blacklisting politically active Pakistani immigrants, threatening them with non-renewal of their

residence permits or even accusing them of terrorism. The idea of organising the 'people's court' was a climax of the justice campaign, building bridges with the Pakistani diaspora and transforming the big room —where the symbolic trial was held— into a space for political participation and dialogue. The event ended with cheers for Aslam's freedom and a feast to which members of StWC were officially invited (*Ergatiki Allilegii,* 2006b).

January – February 2007: Building cross-ethnic solidarities

From early 2007 until Aslam's trial in May, considerable efforts were made to sustain mass activities against the extradition request. It is noteworthy that during these months many immigrant organisations joined the chorus to support Aslam. To cite some examples, in Rethymnon, Crete, the Albanian community ―which led the anti-racist movement after the murder of Jahai one year earlier― mobilised and actively supported a local demonstration for Aslam in January 2007 (Panagiotakopoulos, 2007). In Athens, on 10 February 2007, the 'No to racism from the baby's cot' campaign also sent solidarity messages. As the president of KASAPI Hellas declared: '[Javed's] struggle is everyone's struggle' (*Ergatiki Allilegii,* 2007a).

May 2007: The Supreme Court turned down the extradition request

At the May 2007 trial, the political pressure from the mobilisations was combined with a legal strategy building on the broad solidarity movement, as illustrated by the defence witnesses.[111] The Supreme Court turned down the extradition request by a three-to-two majority. According to the Supreme Court the charges against Aslam were unfounded and there was no relevant extradition treaty between Greece

[111] The defence witnesses included Stratis Korakas (former MEP of KKE and member of the Democratic Rally for Freedom and Solidarity), Alekos Alavanos (President of Synaspismos), Yannis Sifakakis (coordinator of StWC), Antonis Karras (a historic and founding member of PASOK) and Georgios-Alexandros Mangakis (ex-Minister of Justice and member of the Democratic Rally for Freedom and Solidarity) (*Ergatiki Allilegii,* 2007c).

and Pakistan (*Kathimerini,* 2007). Reflecting the polarisation between the Pakistani Community and the Pakistani Embassy were the two simultaneous protests organised outside the Supreme Court. The first, organised by the Pakistani Community, shouted slogans against 'the junta of Pakistan', while the second, one, organised by the embassy, was pro-Musharraf and anti-Aslam.

The Pakistani Community members received their president with cheers after the Supreme Court delivered its judgement, and they marched to celebrate the victory through the city centre (Thoidou, 2007). The victory was also celebrated at a large event in front of the Athens City Hall with speeches, Pakistani songs and poems, which was attended by hundreds of Pakistanis and the Greek supporters from all the social and political organisations that contributed in various ways to the campaign. The start of a new era for the Pakistani Community, the event commenced with the opening of the new central Unity office opposite the City Hall (*Rizospastis,* 2007b: 23; Verde, 2007).

6.6 On the Campaign's Legacy: Organisation, Alliances, and Litigation

It is hard to discuss the legacy of the campaign without carefully considering that it was the beginning of a strong alliance between the Pakistani Community and the Greek Left. As Aslam noted in our interview, he would never forget all the solidarity he received those days. Aslam specifically mentioned how honoured he felt that important personalities related to the Greek history, the anti-dictatorship struggle and the struggles for democratic rights had so actively supported him. As he summarised it: *'The most valuable lesson of the campaign between 2005 and 2007 is the power of the immigrant and Greek workers when they are united'.*

I would like to suggest that Barker's theoretical formulation of 'expansive learning under fire' (Barker, 2014) is applicable in this case. Under considerable pressure from really strong opponents, the Pakistani immigrants had to rapidly develop their own strengths and possibilities for activity (Ibid). Instead of being passive recipients of support, the Pakistani immigrants developed their own

organising methods, their distinctive style of networking and a sense of political purpose deeply rooted in the community. Through participating in the events of the Greek and international Left[112] and, in turn, inviting the Greek Left to their own events and, even more importantly, through organising together the campaign, it appears that the interaction between the Pakistani Community and the Greek Left was a learning process based on mutual trust and the capacity for solidarity.

As writer and activist Kevin Ovenden notes, these creative interactions between the immigrant communities and the Greek Left can be traced back to the large-scale protests against the Iraq War (Ovenden, 2015a: 69). In light of this, it is no chance that the StWC managed to work more closely with the Pakistani Community. Both the anti-war movement and the campaign for the abductees raised awareness of the role of Islamophobia in the context of the war on terror. Ovenden describes this process as a 'cross-fertilisation' (2015a: 75) and gives credit to that section of the Greek Left which had the capacity to 'imaginatively bridge those domains that such a cross-fertilisation took place' (Ibid: 76).

Turning attention to litigation, the victory in the extradition case was a major political and legal achievement that contributed to broader democratic struggles against the criminalisation of immigrant political activities. On the other hand, the case of the abductions was, ultimately, archived in April 2010,[113] no parliamentary committee was ever established to probe the case and no person was ever brought to justice. Typically, this would be considered a legal defeat. Similar to Kuneva's criminal case, I would like to suggest that success or failure is a more complicated issue if a legal struggle is based on collective action and appeals to the wider public. Indicative of the latter is a survey carried out during 2006, which found that the majority of the Greek public was not convinced by the

[112] To cite an example, Javed Aslam participated in the 4th European Social Forum in Athens in 2006 and was speaker at the seminar against Islamophobia organised by the StWC (Protovoulia Genova, 2006).
[113] Council of Misdemeanours Court Judges in Athens (Decision No. 517/2010).

government's official line, with 53% believing that the Pakistanis were abducted by the secret services (Mavris *et al.*, 2010).

Finally, discussing the legacy of the campaign, it appears that participation in the campaign motivated many members to contribute to the daily work of the community. During this period, the Pakistani Community was active in more than 30 municipalities around Greece and published its own newspaper. More than 200 Pakistani immigrants visited daily the central office of the Pakistani Community in Athens and received help and advice concerning access to asylum, renewal of residence permits, employment, healthcare and other issues (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2007b). In 2007, in cooperation with the local Mayor, the Pakistani Community opened in the neighbourhood of Rendi a community school for Pakistani children so that they could learn their mother tongue.

6.7 Summary

This chapter explored the history of the Pakistani Community of Greece Unity from its creation until the December 2008 uprising. While the Pakistani Community is not the only Pakistani association in Greece, it is certainly the most active, well-organised and impactful. The chapter demonstrated how the Pakistani Community re-organised its activities the period between 2005 and 2007 in order to address unprecedented challenges, related to the abductions case and the arrest of Javed Aslam, which brought them into conflict with Greek, British and Pakistani authorities. A crucial aspect of this re-organisation was forging an alliance with the Greek Left and especially with StWC and SEK. Special emphasis was placed on the capacity of the Pakistani Community to build momentum and take advantage of it when the situation required quick and risky decisions in a context of uncertainty.

'Expansive learning under fire' (Barker, 2014) in this case included massive rallies, successful media interventions and press conferences, broad alliances in Greece including prisoners and exiles of the 1967-74 military junta, international networks including the Pakistani diaspora and the global Left, 'a

people's court' with 2,000 Pakistani participants and forms of lawyering organically related to the extra-legal movement. The findings disrupt legal nihilist approaches and demonstrate that filing complaints and demanding from the state a thorough investigation can actually trigger collective action instead of hindering it. Even though the abductors were never brought to justice, the Pakistani immigrants managed through the campaign to claim their own public voice and turn the tables on those who violated their fundamental rights and presented them as a national security threat.

Based on the above, the chapter revealed the links between the legacy of the campaign and the role of the Pakistani Community before and during 'December' fighting together with StWC and SEK against institutional racism and anti-immigrant police violence. This alliance between the Pakistani Community and the Greek Left built over the second half of the 2000s proved decisive during the 2010s.

Part C

Chapter 7: Beyond the Eurocentric Imagination. Geographies of Resistance behind and beyond two Landmark Asylum Cases

7.1 Introduction

In light of the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 3, this chapter examines the stories of Mohammed Khatib and Mamadou Bah, both recognised as refugees in Belgium. In early July 2019, I travelled to Brussels to conduct interviews with both of them based on their distinctive political and legal stories. While legal details are also included here, the research questions are mainly oriented towards their political activism. This way, the chapter proposes a reading of their legal cases interconnected with, and to an extent subordinated to, their political projects.

Concerning the examination of political activism, the chapter sheds light on alternative geographies of resistance beyond Europe in tandem with focusing on the Greek social and political context. As a result, the method proposed here concentrates on forms of activism prior to, during and after migration. The two stories examined in this chapter illustrate well the stakes of the crisis in Greece with regard to the immigrant and the refugee question and, simultaneously bring focus into the relation between transnational forms of activism and the nation form of politics.

7.2 'Born with history, born with politics': The Story of Mohammed Khatib in Ain el-Helweh Camp, Lebanon

Mohammed Khatib was born in 1990 and raised in the Ain el-Helweh refugee camp in the south of Lebanon, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in the country. First settled in 1948 after the Nakba of

Palestine,[114] the Ain el-Helweh camp is connected to the Palestinian national liberation struggle. As Khatib put it in our interview:

> *In this environment, you are born with history, it's not something you choose, you are born with politics. You don't decide to go into politics. Everything around you is politicised. (…) You start to know Palestine from the names around you, you see 'Al Quds' in a small store selling juices, the name of your school would be 'Jaffa' and so on. The people stick to all of those signs in order to keep their history and the issue of the right to return.*

The camp started with tents and gradually developed into what Khatib described as a kind of slum. It is the most crowded camp in Lebanon, with 100,000 people living in an area of one square kilometre. This is how Khatib described how the form of the camp affected the everyday life of its inhabitants:

> *You always live in the temporary time. When you grow up in the camp in this environment, when you are 13 years old you are not really a child in the way we usually understand children. (…) Today my mind can open from Belgium to Palestine, pass from Greece to Lebanon. I see this picture. But in that time, I saw just 1km.*

At 14, Khatib was introduced by an older cousin to the Cultural Youth Centre, which was an active social centre run by camp residents, which proved to be crucial to Khatib's engagement with the Palestinian Left movement. Commenting on the library of the centre, he described:

> *In the beginning, I started to pretend I am reading big books. So, I borrowed Marx's Capital. But it was very difficult to understand it. Then, one comrade suggested reading novels. From novels,[115] I started building my imagination outside this 1km² camp and outside Lebanon.*

The relations between the Ain el-Helweh camp inhabitants and the Lebanese people were described by Khatib as complex. As he explained, while a considerable part of the Lebanese people traditionally stood in solidarity with the Palestinian refugees, exclusion and legal restrictions were standard

[114] For an examination of the 1948 Nakba, see Pappe (2017).

[115] An influential novelist from his readings during that period is the Moroccan Muhammad Shukrī whose autobiography *For Bread Alone* (2012 [1973]) raises issues of colonialism, poverty, petty crimes and gender-based violence.

everyday experiences for those refugees. Passing the checkpoint to enter and exit the camp added to this complexity —as Khatib said, *'when you go out, it feels like you are in another world'.*

In light of the above, it is interesting to examine how the July 2006 war with Israel affected life in the camp and re-arranged the 'inside–outside' relationship. During this *'24-hour bombing month'*, as Khatib described it, Ain el-Helweh was generally considered safe. As a result, it became the destination for Lebanese people from villages near the southern borders, who were internally displaced to save their lives. The interaction between the Lebanese people and the Palestinian refugees initially felt awkward because of the unexpected interactions and reversed roles, but quickly developed with an astonishing wave of solidarity and a new sense of community:

> *Our people were very supportive and opened the houses, the schools, everything. All the youth and all the organisations were part of the aid and volunteering teams. (…) They stayed for a month. That period a lot of love stories happened and many mixed marriages. Things were mixed.*

After he joined the Cultural Youth Centre Khatib gradually became an active organiser of the refugee students and youth. Active political engagement gave him the opportunity to engage in activities outside the camp, such as a summer camp with Palestinian and Lebanese leftists. Far from romanticising the situation for the Palestinian Left, he had a sophisticated understanding of the balance of forces related to the consequences of the Soviet Union's fall and the Oslo Accords during the '90s. While the Second Palestinian Intifada after 2000 influenced the youth in Lebanon's refugee camps and encouraged their political engagement, Khatib underlined the leadership crisis in the Palestinian movement:

> *You don't see a lot of organic comrades now, even leaders of the movements are not the organic intellectuals as you describe it. They were vulnerable guys from the camp, steadfast there all of their youth, committed people but also in a failed time without new intellectual knowledge.*

Khatib linked the leadership crisis to the culture of defeat and the intensification of the internal divisions in the Palestinian movement, which often led to clashes in the camps that sometimes felt like mini-wars. At the same time, the defeat of the progressive line and the Left's difficulties in mobilising the poor and connecting with its supposed audience provided space for disorientation among the refugee population and the rising influence of Salafist groups.

In 2008, for reasons not addressed here, his life was at risk and he was forced to leave Ain el-Helweh and Lebanon.

7.3 'It wasn't my dream to live in Europe': From Ain el-Helweh to Athens

Each time Khatib visited his aunt in Damascus during the '00s, he found that the living conditions for Palestinian refugees were better in Syria than in Lebanon. In contrast, he knew stories of Palestinians who left Ain el-Helweh to achieve the European dream and, after four or five years in Europe, were still undocumented, homeless and depressed. On these grounds, when Khatib had to flee Lebanon in 2008, he decided to move to Damascus. However, after eight months in the Damascus Yarmouk camp, he could not obtain a residence permit and had to flee Syria as well. At this point, the only option left for him was to cross the border into Turkey and then move from Turkey into Europe through Greece. While the war in Syria had not yet started in 2009, border-crossing was always a dangerous 'operation', as he called it. His journey was a typical transborder horror story —these stories often ended with arrests, push-backs, beatings, shootings and an endless graveyard.

Khatib had to pay a lot of money to smugglers —the 'mafia' as he called them— and cross the borders with a random group of people, including children, mostly from Asia and Africa. After endless walking and hunger, he managed to reach Antalya and then Istanbul. For three months, he hid in Istanbul to avoid deportation. The next destination was Izmir, and from there, with a small boat, Khatib and other four people managed to survive crossing the Aegean Sea and reached the Greek island of Samos.

However, to avoid the Greek Coast Guard, the smuggler left the group on the rural side of the island instead of at the port on the opposite side. Without money, mobile phones, maps or any knowledge of the Greek language, the group had to find a way to the port and from there to Athens.

From his first interactions with the Greek people, Khatib's feelings were mixed. He shared memories of farmers who were kind enough to give the group bread and cheese, but also recalled those who tried to exploit their difficult position by asking for €500 per person for a ride to the port. The group initially tried to hide from the police. However, due to the cold weather and their hunger, they soon started searching for the Greek police, which proved more difficult than hiding from them. Worse, when they did find them, the group was immediately subject to ill treatment. The exhausted and starving refugees were locked in a van that a police officer then started driving too fast around the island:

> *It was very difficult to breathe. There was no oxygen. We tried to knock from behind with no result. We didn't know what was going on, it was night, it was very scary and we were suffocating.*

As they later realised, the police officer combined patrolling with this poor treatment to intimidate them. The following month, the group was detained in Samos under conditions Khatib described as follows:

> *It was not a refugee camp. It was like an overcrowded prison inside with something like a playground outside where we could go for two hours during the day. It was very stressful and I don't remember many details. It was at the top of a mountain and there were a lot of dogs around. They were giving us only one meal a day in the morning, one cup of milk, a small pie and that's it for the rest of the day.*

A month later, the authorities gave them boat tickets and the group travelled to Athens. Three of the group had already arranged with smugglers to continue their journey to another European country. Khatib stayed in Athens along with another refugee and had to find a way to survive in Athens with only 40 or 50 Euros in their pockets. Khatib's companion managed, through a contact, to arrange a meeting with a Palestinian already living in Greece. This Palestinian's reaction illustrates the difficulty

of the situation: *'Why are you coming to Greece? This is very hard here now. I cannot host you'.* That first night, they ended up sleeping at a cheap hotel in the city centre, which they subsequently discovered was a *'prostitution hotel'*. The next morning, Khatib started walking around the city in a state of anxiety and uncertainty, trying to figure out a way to flee Greece. He explained why he did not consider staying at that point:

> *When we arrived in Athens it was 2009, there was no refugee camp, no asylum service. I met many people without documents. And there was this motor police who stopped the migrants. The police was very racist. It was very dangerous. (…) You could not find a job in Greece, because, financially, it was the beginning of the failing.*

Khatib was lucky enough to find an Egyptian café and, by coincidence, an acquaintance from the Ain el-Helweh camp. Through this contact, he arranged a meeting with someone who could help them escape Greece and reach a destination with more decent reception conditions. For the following three weeks, Khatib and the other refugee slept in an unofficial underground mosque in Athens. On his first attempt to flee Greece, Khatib was arrested and beaten by police officers. He described being detained in the police station of the airport and, some days later, being brought to a courtroom. As he continued: *'There was no interpreter, and the police kicked me out of the courtroom without explaining anything about the procedure'.*

Khatib recalled feeling depressed and angry about this treatment. Rethinking these experiences at a café in Brussels a decade later, he offered important insights into the situation of migrants in transit. In particular, he pointed out that stress in transit could lead to what he called 'the trap of political disengagement'. He defined this as a situation whereby instead of trying to find contacts and help, a migrant will choose the 'easy case' of sticking with a group of other migrants in transit. The result of this trap is the deprivation of alternative possibilities. He summarised this kind of thinking as *'the trap of seeing things inside the box'*:

> *I was just shaping [trying to] survive without realising the full picture (…) I was pretty unconscious of what's going on. (…) I was seeing Athens and Greece disconnected from the historical background.*

He was so stressed that he did not even consider searching for political contacts in Greece using his activist background. From the list of factors favouring this 'inside the box' thinking, Khatib identified the language barrier as the most important. Ultimately, Khatib managed to flee Greece and arrived in Belgium. Before examining what happened upon his arrival in Brussels, one more story is brought into the discussion, the story of Mamadou Bah.

7.4 The Story of Mamadou Bah and the Impact of the post-2008 Crisis on the African Communities

Bah was born and raised in Guinea and arrived in Greece in 2006 at the age of 32. Similar to Khatib and other research participants, Bah entered through Turkey on a small boat as part of a dangerous journey. Upon his arrival in Athens, Bah faced homelessness. After 10 difficult days and nights at America Square in the city centre, a Guinean passer-by offered Bah accommodation and assistance. This person informed Bah about the Union of Guinea of Greece (UGG).

From his first engagement with the UGG, Bah observed that most members were integrated into Greek society, many having children born in Greece. Gradually, Bah was familiarising with the political realities in Greece, became more involved in the UGG and raised in the union's agenda issues related to the difficulties the newly arrived immigrants faced in Athens. As Bah explained, the latter were 'lost' in a city that had almost no services and facilities to meet their basic needs—that is what Bah identified as the 'structural gap' of immigration policies. His main idea was a change in the union's orientation in order to contribute as much as possible to the provision of social care for newly arrived immigrants. The idea was mooted almost for a year:

> *It required a patient work of persuading the more reluctant older members that the union could not be restricted to a small mutual aid team around religious and other ceremonies. The stakes were high. Hopefully, the new ideas had the support of the president of the union.*

The idea was adopted and implemented as follows. In 2007, the UGG increased its membership fees, took legal form and carried out the first of its social projects. Strikingly, other African communities in Athens re-organised their activities in a similar way during the same period. Bah articulated how these African communities achieved an informal solidarity network:

> *If I met by chance someone who needed help from Cote d'Ivoire I would directly inform the president of the Cote d'Ivoire Community in Greece. (…) There was even a competition between the African communities, not in the negative sense, but as a sense of fair play with each community trying to contribute more than the others to the social projects.*

While the associations' resources were limited, they managed to rent some apartments for refugees to stay in temporarily after arriving in Athens and offer them food. Further, the common social projects contributed to a sense of unity between the African communities that Bah described as *'unity in Pan-African perspective'*. The outcome of this process was the creation of the Union of African Communities of Greece (UACG) in 2007. The different communities participating in UACG elected three members to represent them in a coordinating committee. Based on his participation in that committee, Bah described it as a space of dialogue, knowledge exchange, collective empowerment, experimentation and collaborative planning. The representatives were allowed to put any issue on the agenda that reflected internal discussion at their own associations; some proposals were prioritised, while others, as Bah told me, were classified as 'crazy ideas'.

UACG's operations could be divided in two phases demarcated by the eruption of the crisis and the general rise of racism. Of course, crisis and racism were a permanent situation for immigrants long before 2008. It is illustrative how Bah commented on the December 2008 uprising:

> *Of course, we participated in the big demonstrations and we wanted to show our solidarity. And it was also an opportunity to interact with the Greek people and explain to them that the*

> *police were very often beating and, even, opening fire against us and there was no public discussion.*

Bah explained that the African immigrants' perception of police was shaped by the many instances when police officers treated them with disrespect and hostility. Bah shared the following indicative experience related to an athletic event. In summer 2007, UACG and the GFM (2007)[116] initiated a large athletic event with the support of the Municipality of Athens and the Hellenic Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN).[117] The 'Cup of co-existence', as it was called, transformed football games into acts of solidarity, with immigrants and Greek people celebrating together. The next year, the communities were worried about the rising frequency of racist attacks in Athens and the organisers of the 'Cup of co-existence' decided to take some extra safety measures. Bah participated in the delegation that visited the police station, informed the authorities that final Cup was taking place and requested that two police officers stand outside the stadium. Bah's description is illuminating:

> *The chief of police looked us in the eye and told us that he would never mobilise police officers to protect any event organised by the immigrants in this country. It was clear that we had nothing to wait for from the police. The following years, we decided to stop the 'Cup of co-existence' for safety reasons.*

'After 2008, it was heard everywhere that we are responsible for the crisis', Bah explained. The turning point came after 2010 with the rise of racists attacks by *'Golden Dawn death squads'*, as he called them, stating that if a racist attack was reported to the police, the police would arrive one hour later *'just to be sure that the perpetrators had gone away'*. As a result of the rise of Golden Dawn, UACG was partly deactivated, since most members preferred to avoid meetings and union activities for safety reasons. The most active organisers systematically worked to devise new solutions. In this context, they came closer to the Greek anti-racist initiatives, building on the solidarity bonds forged over

[116] UACG was generally working closely with the GFM.
[117] For more information, see EAPN (2007), available at: https://www.eapn.eu/hellenic-anti-poverty-network-eapn-greece/ (Accessed: 11 November 2020).

previous years.[118] Bah noted that the mass movement provided a feeling of safety that was necessary to persuade UACG members to re-engage in collective activities.[119] It is remarkable the fact that this coordination opened a space for a stronger alliance that went far beyond the fascist threat. As Bah explained:

> *Before, we were more restricted to the problems of the African communities. As we came closer to the Greek organisations, we were discussing together the general situation in Greece and Europe as part of the same movement.*

Bah described this process as *'the convergence of struggles and forces'*. A highlight of this convergence was UACG's participation in the impressive demonstrations that took place during the frequent 24-hour and 48-hour general strikes between 2010 and 2012. Bah pointed out that interacting with the Greek Left had its difficulties due to language barriers and a lack of knowledge of the country's history. However, he noted the possibilities of reaching a common understanding and highlighted how their experiences from Africa contributed to the analyses of the situation in Greece. As Bah summarised it:

> *We tried to explain to the Greek organisations that this 'austerity' thing was only the new name for the 'structural adjustment programmes', like the ones implemented in Africa during the '80s. We tried to draw their attention to the fact that the implementation of SAPs means that everything is privatised, you are completely losing the control of your country, the state has no resources and most of the people are soon unemployed or work as slaves. It is disaster at the social level. We saw it coming because we've lived it again.*

[118] Bah noted that UACG had relations with many different anti-racist initiatives and organisations of the Greek Left. He particularly referred to KEERFA as contributing to these efforts.

[119] Bah also commented on the motorcade demonstrations in the immigrant neighbourhoods, organised by antifascist groups, mainly from the anarchist spectrum: *'Seeing that a part of the Greek society was determined to support us at all costs gave us back our confidence. It was a boost and a wake-up for our communities'.* For further information on the police repression against an emblematic antifascist motorcade demonstration at the end of September 2012 in central Athens, the arrests of dozens of antifascists and the allegations of torture and ill-treatment, see Margaronis (2012).

12. African immigrants participating in the general strike demonstration in Athens, 24 February 2010 (Thoidou, 2010: 17).

7.5 A Detour through Guinea: The New Pan-African Student Movement and the Long-lasting Anti-colonial and Anti-fascist Memory

In light of Bah's later activism, the following incidents appear to be the most crucial in his early political formation during the period of the 1990s and the early 2000s. The first is his participation in the student movement at school and at university, where he was studying political science during the 1990's —without completing his studies. In our interview, Bah shared memories from student protests against tuition fees and emphasised the role of repression in an attempt to quash these protests, and described that soldiers, and sometimes even a tank, were stationed outside Gamal Abdel Nasser University of Conakry as a form of intimidation.

Bah's analysis of the student movement in Guinea is in line with scholars' and activists' analysis of the movement against the recolonisation of education in Africa after the adoption of SAPs by mid-1980, what they identify as 'the new Pan-African student' (Federici, Caffentzis and Alidou, 2000). As they comment on its distinctive features: 'It is continuous in its political aspirations with the student

activism that developed in the context of the anti-colonial struggle, and yet more radical in its challenge to the established political order' (Ibid: 88)

Apart from the student movement, another factor that was crucial to Bah's political formation was his family background. As he explained: *'My father had a capitalistic attitude towards reality. My grandfather represented humanism and social conscience. At the age of 15 I felt I had to choose between the two opposing worldviews'.* Bah decided to follow in his grandfather's footsteps. That decision broke Bah's ties with his father and deprived him of his father's financial support.

Consider the following story, which most clearly represents Bah's influences: His grandfather participated in the anti-fascist resistance in France during WWII as part of the Tirailleurs Sénégalais.[120] At some point, Bah informed his grandfather about the French government's decision concerning WWII veterans from the former colonies and the opportunity for them to apply for a pension equal to that of their French counterparts.[121] The old anti-fascist fighter explained to his grandson that during WWII, the African riflemen were not only exposed to the Nazi massacres, but also experienced racism within the ranks of the anti-fascist troops. With inappropriate clothing, old and faulty rifles and inadequate military training, the black soldiers felt that the French commanders used them as cannon fodder. On these grounds, he told Bah that he refused to accept the money from the French state in memory of his comrades-in-arms who fell in battle.[122]

[120] The Senegalese Tirailleurs were a riflemen infantry corps in the French army, recruited from the French African colonies, mainly those in the sub-Saharan region.
[121] The pensions of military veterans from France's former colonies is related to the 'crystallisation' law and has been a thorny issue for many decades. The French government has been heavily criticised for discriminatory measures that gave 'native' veterans different pensions and allowances to those of former Tirailleurs (Parent, 2008).
[122] It is noteworthy that Fanon was also among those who fought for France in the anti-fascist struggle. Alessandrini (2014: 140) notes that Fanon's arrival in France 'initiated his first, paradigmatic experience of metropolitan racism'. As Haddour (2019: 8) adds: 'He [Fanon] had fought against Nazism ―against intolerance, prejudice, narrow-minded and xenophobic nationalism― and yet, ironically, he found himself the subject of racial discrimination in France'.

The stories of Bah's grandfather exemplify the transmission of the anti-colonial and anti-fascist past from the older to the younger generations through oral history. In the '90s, considering the military control over political authority in Guinea, the role of censorship, the recolonisation of education and the still unavailable internet access,[123] it appears that oral tradition was decisive in reclaiming militant knowledge of the past. It is useful to relate these findings to a growing scholarship that has approached anti-fascism from a transnational and global perspective in recent years, revealing the abundance and complexity of anti-fascist ideas, movements and practices (Garcia, 2016; Braskén, Copsey and Featherstone, 2020).

Commenting on the relation between his early political experiences and his later activism in Greece and Belgium, Bah stated:

> *I found it very clever that you asked me where my ideas came from. (…) I don't know why people find it so difficult to understand that there is resistance born in Africa. Some of the people that come in Europe and know how to organise some things, it's because they learnt it from their experiences and struggles in Africa.*

7.6 The Case of Mohammed Khatib in Belgium: 'Dismantling the Dublin System' and Beyond[124]

In 2009, two months after he first reached the island of Samos and one week after his arrest at Athens airport, Khatib managed to reach Brussels, where he applied for asylum. Soon after the application, the Belgian authorities informed Khatib that an examination and comparison of his fingerprints had generated a Eurodac 'hit' report, revealing that he had been registered in Greece. Eight months later, in 2010, Khatib was taken into custody with a view to enforcing the Belgian authorities' decision to return him to Greece. With the legal support of a lawyer from the Progress Lawyers Network, Khatib

[123] According to the data, the number of internet users in Guinea has grown from 42,000 in 2010 to four million in 2019 (Toussi, 2019).
[124] The title is inspired by Moreno-Lax's (2012) reflections on M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece.

applied to the ECHR (Application No. 19599/10),[125] providing evidence that his return to Greece under the Dublin Regulation was not compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (hereafter 'the Convention'). Due to the *MSS v. Belgium and Greece* case pending before the ECHR, Khatib was soon released from detention.[126]

In the MSS case, the Court examined the compatibility of the Dublin II Regulation with the Convention regarding transfers to Greece and delivered its judgment on 21 January 2011.[127] In particular, the Court found that Greece had violated Article 3 of the Convention,[128] because of the M.S.S.'s detention and living conditions in Greece. The Court placed emphasis on the following facts. Pursuant to the Dublin Regulation, Belgium transferred M.S.S. back to Greece in order for Greece to process the asylum claim. Greece detained M.S.S. in degrading conditions and then released him into the country to await a decision on his application. Then, M.S.S. found himself in a state of the most extreme poverty, unable to cater for his most basic needs: food, hygiene and a place to live. The Court noted that the situation of M.S.S. existed on a large scale and was the everyday reality for a large number of asylum seekers with the same profile as that of M.S.S. This was the first time that the Court held a Member State's failure to satisfy basic socio-economic needs constituted a violation of Article 3 of the Convention.

In addition, the Court found that Greece had violated Article 13 of the Convention[129] taken in conjunction with Article 3 due to the deficiencies in the Greek authorities' examination of the asylum

[125] At a later stage, Khatib's case was jointly struck out in the ECHR decision on *Omid et Zohre Sheykhzade v. Belgium* in view of the court's judgement in *MSS v. Belgium and Greece*.
[126] For an analysis on Rule 39 interim measures, as applied before the publication of the *M.S.S v. Belgium and Greece* judgement see ELENA (2012), available at: https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/RULE-39-RESEARCH_FINAL.pdf (Accessed: 27 December 2020).
[127] For the judgment by the ECHR (Application no. 30696/09) see European Court of Human Rights (2011). For a short presentation of the ECHR ruling see ESCR-Net (2011), available at: https://www.escr-net.org/caselaw/2015/mss-v-belgium-and-greece-application-no-3069609 (Accessed: 3 January 2021).
[128] Article 3 of the Convention: *Prohibition of torture: No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment* (European Court of Human Rights, 2010).
[129] Article 13 of the Convention: *Right to an effective remedy: Everyone whose rights and freedoms as set forth in this Convention are violated shall have an effective remedy before a national authority*

request and the risk M.S.S. faced of being returned directly or indirectly to his country of origin without any serious examination of the merits of his asylum application and without having access to an effective remedy. Once again, the Court noted the general deficiencies of the asylum procedure in Greece and not only the specific handling of M.S.S.'s case. Finally, the court found that Belgium had violated the same articles of the Convention by transferring M.S.S. back to Greece and exposing him to risks, as described above. This way, the Court confirmed that the Dublin Regulation's presumption that participating states respect their human rights obligations under the Convention may be rebutted. Notably, the Court found the general country situation (detention, living conditions, asylum procedures), rather than the asylum seeker's individual circumstances, most significant in assessing whether the Belgian authorities 'knew or ought to have known' of M.S.S.'s risk of ill treatment in Greece (International Commission of Jurists, 2011).

The historical significance of this judgement concerning asylum and human rights law has been highlighted at a scholarly level. According to Dembour (2020), it is 'a jurisprudential cornerstone guaranteed to be a landmark judgment for years and decades to come'. The former president of the International Federation for Human Rights emphasised that 'for the first time since 1974,[130] Greece [was] practically viewed as a destination to which a person cannot be returned because of the inhumane conditions' (Christopoulos, 2014: 35).

In view of the court judgement in the MSS case, the Belgian authorities were responsible for examining Khatib's application. Khatib's 'long march' through the asylum procedure included a first-instance rejection of his claim, an initial unsuccessful appeal and an annulment appeal before the highest administrative court of law in Belgium. Ultimately, Khatib was granted refugee status in the autumn

notwithstanding that the violation has been committed by persons acting in an official capacity (European Court of Human Rights, 2010).

[130] Christopoulos is referring to the Greek military dictatorship (1967–74). In 1969, the Regime of the Colonels denounced the European Convention of Human Rights and withdrew from the Council of Europe. This was the response of the military junta to the to the report by the European Commission of Human Rights against the Greek junta alleging violations of the Convention by Greece.

of 2015. Asylum was five years late in his case. During these five years, Khatib faced serious difficulties in terms of making a living in Brussels. Due to financial hardship, he had to return to a refugee camp for a short period of time in 2014, until he found a job in a factory with the help of a social worker in the camp. Highlighting the psychological impact of the delay in the asylum procedure, he described feeling *'stressed, tired of life, almost a junkie'*. As he remarked of the asylum interview: *'it has nothing to do with human rights. It is more like a 3–4-hour interrogation'*.

At this point, I suggest rethinking Khatib's legal case in the context of his political re-engagement in Belgium. Soon after his arrival in Belgium, Khatib started participating in Brussels' Palestinian community and often engaged in activities with Belgian leftists. Through these political contacts, he was introduced to the Progress Lawyers Network and was informed about the Dublin case and the possibility of appealing to the ECHR. In fact, at all stages of his legal odyssey, he steadily received legal support from members of the Progress Lawyers Network. Indicative of Khatib's sophisticated understanding of strategic litigation is the fact that he described the Progress Lawyers Network, as significantly contributing to connecting individual legal cases with the collective situation and rights of the immigrant and refugee communities in general.[131]

Two milestones in Khatib's political participation in Belgium are related to his engagement with Samidoun in 2012 and the European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP) in 2013. ECCP is a network of 42 European committees, organisations, NGOs, unions and international solidarity movements from 19 European countries, dedicated to the Palestinian people's

[131] Progress Lawyers Network originated in 2003 as a network of progressive lawyer's offices in Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent. Among other important cases, members of the Progress Lawyers Network offered legal support to the political leader of Philippine communist movement, Jose Maria C Sison, who succeeded to have his name removed from the EU terrorist list by the decision of the European Court of Justice in 2009 (EU Court of First Instance, 2009). Members of the Progress Lawyers Network have presented on this case in the 2005 Congress of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (Fermon *et al*., 2005).

struggle for freedom, justice and equality.[132] Working with the ECCP, Khatib often spent half the day in the European Parliament, participating in meetings and raising awareness of Palestinian issues. Since he was spending the other half of each day in marginalised and deprived neighbourhoods, he characterised this situation as a bit *'schizophrenic'*. Later, Khatib served as the European coordinator of Samidoun, an international network of organisers and activists working to build solidarity with Palestinian prisoners in their struggle for freedom.[133]

7.7 The Case of Mamadou Bah in Belgium: Twice a Refugee, Always an Anti-fascist

In October 2013, Bah arrived in Brussels with the help of Greek activists and applied for asylum in Belgium with the legal support of a lawyer from the Progress Lawyers Network. His life was at serious risk in Greece, since he was targeted by Golden Dawn and the Greek state proved unable and unwilling to protect his fundamental rights. In May 2013, while waiting for the bus to take him home after a night shift, Bah was beaten by a Golden Dawn death squad at 3 am. Eight thugs with four motorbikes were involved in the attack, and one of them hit Bah over the head with an iron bar (Euronews, 2014). Bah still carries the scar of this racist attack. During summer 2013, he escaped another ambush at the last moment from Golden Dawners outside his workplace. At that point, he decided to publicly denounce the attacks and spoke to Greek and international media (Tziantzi, 2013; Malagardis, 2013).

In September 2013, Bah was subject to ill-treatment at the hands of the Greek authorities. In particular, the police brought him to the station under false pretences. Although the police officers had nothing to charge him with, they stripped him at the police station, humiliated him and threatened him by telling him that he could not speak to the media again. As Bah stated, the police officers told him: 'If you

[132] For further information, see ECCP (n.d.), available at: https://www.eccpalestine.org/about-us/ (Accessed: 11 November 2020).
[133] For more information about Samidoun see Samidoun (2011), available at: https://samidoun.net/about-samidoun/ (Accessed: 11 November 2020).

want to play politics, go back to Africa! Greece is for the Greeks!' (Plazy, 2014). Over the following days, Bah found Golden Dawn stickers beside his doorbell. After the murder of the Greek anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas by a Golden Dawn death squad on 18 September 2013, Bah realised that fleeing Greece was the only way to save his life.

In order to understand the stakes of Bah's asylum case in Belgium, it is important to consider that Bah was already a recognised refugee in Greece before applying for asylum in Belgium. In light of this, how did the Belgian authorities agree to examine his application in the first place? According to Bah's lawyer:

> Dublin II does not apply in his case, because he has come from Greece. The situation faced by immigrants there is catastrophic and this has been acknowledged on several occasions, including by the European Court of Human Rights.
>
> (Stein in Plazy, 2014)

As a result, the Office of the General Commissioner for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRA) had to examine his situation in both Guinea and in Greece to reach a decision. In spring 2014, Belgian authorities decided to grant Bah refugee status. The case has been described as 'a historic first for the right to asylum in Europe' (Plazy, 2014). Even if the grounds on which the CGRA based its decision to grant political asylum were not given, the implications of this momentous victory are far-reaching. The then head of the Athens office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) describes it as a 'wake-up call, or even worse, a strong slap regarding a substantial function of the rule of law in a European country [Greece]' (Tsarbopoulos in Moviementa Productions, 2014). Consider how Bah's lawyer articulates the two prevailing logical implications of the asylum decision: 'The Belgian decision does not explain whether Greece is just unable to protect him from Golden Dawn, or whether Greek authorities should be considered to be as responsible as Golden Dawn' (Stein in Euronews, 2014).

A solidarity campaign supported Bah's asylum claim from the beginning. Alongside Belgian activists, very active in this campaign were the members of 'Solidarity Initiative with Greece that resists', which was created in 2010 at the initiative of Greek workers, students and unemployed people living in Brussels. The primary aims of this initiative are to promote the interconnection of the various anti-austerity, working class, anti-racist and anti-fascist movements in Greece, Belgium and other countries and to provide material and moral support for them in Greece (Tsiropoulou, 2014).

13. Antifascist rally in Brussels demanding the conviction of Golden Dawn as a criminal organisation, 3 October 2020. The banner reads in French: 'They are not innocent. Nazis in Prison'.(PSL Parti Socialiste de Lutte, 2020)

Bah joined this solidarity campaign and the Committee for the Cancellation of Illegitimate Debt (CADTM) and participated in various activities of the social movements in Brussels. Two highlights from subsequent years are most indicative of Bah's anti-fascist initiatives. First, as Bah described in our interview, he felt proud of participating in the delegation which visited Auschwitz-Birkenau on the initiative of the General Labour Federation of Belgium (FGTB). Bah travelled to Poland along with the Belgian trade unionists and honoured the memory of Holocaust victims of the Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp, one million of them Jewish men, women and children and tens of thousands communists, Roma, homosexuals, persons with disabilities and other peoples. Secondly, Bah remained always active in the struggle against Golden Dawn. It is indicative that in October 2020

he addressed the anti-fascist rally in Brussels supporting the campaign 'They are not innocent' demanding the conviction of Golden Dawn as a criminal organisation (Kontara, 2020).

7.8 Building Connections: Transnational Solidarities and the Anti-colonial Legacy

> *For me as an Arab, Europe is not an exotic place, it is very close to us. There is tension because there is relation. There is a foundational historical and cultural relation.*

This is how Khatib characterised the common ground between Europe and the Arab world. Giving an example of the intellectual relations between the two, he noted Ibn Khaldun's role in the foundation of the modern social sciences and commented that these relations are often overlooked in Western academia today. Khatib's understanding of Eurocentrism is also illuminating:

> *I think that if it is just [Euro]centric in terms of opening a discussion, it is fine. When we speak about structures of organising, politics, culture, sexuality etc. many of the forms and the terms we are using today are Western. I am open with this thing. The problem is when this centrism is related to supremacy.*

Khatib related white supremacy to the history of European colonialism. His stay in Belgium enriched his understanding of this issue based on his interactions with communities such as the Algerian and the Congolese combined with his own readings of Belgium's colonial past. He also realised how Belgium's colonial background favours what he identified as *'the unconscious reproduction of Eurocentrism'*.

In this context, his thoughts on the European Left are of particular interest. Based on his interactions with the European Left, he concluded that some parts of it systematically avoid dealing with European colonial history. He was also sceptical of those *'know-it-all'* Europeans who invite, for example, the Palestinians to meetings only to tell them their own proposed solution to the Palestinian issue. By contrast, Khatib found that other parts of the Left creatively worked together with the immigrant and refugee communities. He gave the example of the Workers' Party of Belgium (PTB) and explained

how it managed to link the anti-colonial and national liberation struggles with local issues such as housing and youth unemployment.

Finally, Khatib shared his experience from a small research project in which he participated along with a US-based Black activist. Instead of producing academic papers, the primary aim of this research was to build transnational Black–Palestinian solidarity. To achieve this goal, the collaborative project included bringing Black delegations from cities such as Detroit to Lebanon and Palestine and supporting a grassroots organisation in Detroit called 'Black for Palestine'.

Khatib's contribution to the above topics aligned with Bah's. Bah shared his thoughts on the work of Fanon, which he read during his stay in Brussels. He said reading Fanon was an eye-opening process that gave him relief and comfort and encouraged him to keep struggling. He explained that Fanon provided him with a conceptual framework to rethink his experiences in Greece, from police violence to discrimination at work, and relate them to Fanon's insights on Blackness. Playing devil's advocate, I asked him if he ever felt like cutting out of his life anything that reminded him of Greece after what had happened to him. Almost insulted, Bah replied:

> *It never crossed my mind. Greece was an accumulation of experiences. I learnt a lot of things there, both positive and negative. Of course, I faced discrimination, but I also met so many people who stood in solidarity. These people helped me to leave Greece. My only thought when I came in Belgium was how I could help their struggles. Greece is my second homeland.*

This brings us to the last and most important finding. As Nyers states in his critical comments, being a refugee involves an expectation of displaying appropriate qualities associated with 'refugeeness': speechlessness, placelessness, invisibility and victim status (Nyers, 2006: 45). In this context, it appears that Bah's ideas and practices display the exactly opposite qualities. It is hard to find better evidence to support this argument than this: when I asked Bah what kept him standing when police officers stripped and humiliated him, he described that Amilcar Cabral came to his mind, the Bissau-Guinean and Cape Verdean intellectual and revolutionary.

Bah narrated a story from the struggle for African independence. The colonisers used to tell the militants: *'You don't even know how to produce a needle, you know nothing and you deserve nothing. How do you want to be independent?'*, explained Bah, reciting Cabral. Their aim, as Bah explained, was to intervene at the level of their political consciousness to make them lose their confidence and become even more dependent. Cabral and his comrades answered back: *'If we can't produce a needle it is, precisely, because this is the role given to us during the hundred years of colonisation; this is the dispossession of an entire continent and this will change'.* Notably, Bah related this story to his police abuse:

> *The police officers tried to scare me and make me feel so weak that I would give up my activism. I am happy I have read this story of Cabral and that it came to my mind. Because it gave me the strength I needed. Because I thought our people who have been through far worse things in the past and always resisted. Of course, the police failed to make me give up activism. They lost. The following day I was even more determined to continue the struggle.*

7.9 Summary

This chapter attempted to introduce the reader to the situation in Greece after the eruption of the global capitalist crisis. The Greek specificities were considered with a focus on the impact of this crisis on immigrants and refugees. To achieve this, the chapter examined two legal stories concerning reception conditions for asylum seekers and state protection from Golden Dawn. Taken together, they highlight the neo-colonial immigration patterns that lie at the heart of Fortress Europe.

Taking into account the asylum procedures in Greece and Belgium, the findings of this chapter partly deconstructed refugeeness and partly re-signified it. The legal story of Bah in Greece showed that refugee status is meaningless when the level of protection for refugees is so low, as it was in Greece after 2010. Khatib's story in Belgium deconstructed refugeeness by highlighting the Dublin case in relation to *MSS v. Belgium and Greece* and the procedural delays in the process of seeking asylum in Belgium, offering critical insights and suggesting an alternative conception of refugeeness based on

Palestinian activism and the right to return. In light of both the moments of deconstruction and potential resignification, the research proposed seeing the asylum procedures as terrains of struggle. The importance of legal support was highlighted in both cases, revealing legal strategies interrelated with the immigrant and solidarity movements.

Turning to forms of activism, the chapter offered a preliminary view of the stakes of the crisis in Greece and the first indications of Greece as a laboratory of resistance. In addition, the chapter decentred the 'national' and examined the role of transnational identities and solidarities connecting Africa, the Middle East and Europe. The findings disrupted the Eurocentric assumption that immigrant activists discovered politics after arriving in Europe amd instead revealed militant subjectivities in alternative geographies of resistance. Overall, the findings showed the necessity and possibility of creative intellectual dialogues between European, Arab and Black academics and non-academics alike.

Chapter 8: The Pakistani Community in Acts. From the Creation of KEERFA to the Trial of Golden Dawn

8.1 Introduction

This chapter sheds further light on how the Pakistani Community of Greece Unity reorganised its activities to meet the new challenges related to the impact of crisis, the rise of racism and the fascist threat. The organic ties between the Pakistani Community and SEK examined in Part B proved decisive for the initiatives they undertook after 2008.[134]

First of all, SEK and the Pakistani Community were the main forces behind the creation of KEERFA in late 2009. KEERFA (2009) aspired to help achieve four main aims:

a) forge unity between immigrant and native workers;

b) legalise all immigrants;

c) oppose immigrant detention centres;

d) get rid of fascists from the neighbourhoods.

Secondly, a few months later, in the spring of 2010, the Union of Immigrant Workers (UIW) was founded at the initiative of KEERFA. The initial meeting took place with the participation of a few dozen workers from Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Albania, Senegal and Morocco (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2010a). Javed Aslam was elected president of the UIW. Just as KEERFA had already done, the UIW soon expanded its activities in several towns and villages across Greece.

[134] See Part B, Chapter 6

In what follows, I provide a chronology of resistances, indicating the main findings and insights regarding Pakistani immigrants' activist highlights. In the last section, which addresses the Golden Dawn trial (2015-2020), while I deviate from the period under research, the thing is that the trial contributes to a deeper understanding of the period 2012-13.

8.2 More than Riots, More than Religious Issues: Thoughts on the Qur'an Protests in May 2009

In May 2009, during police checks at a Syrian-owned coffee shop, an officer took a customer's Qur'an, tore it up, threw it on the floor and stomped on it (Kyriakidou, 2009). Over the following days, thousands of Muslim immigrants spontaneously marched through Athens, many holding up copies of Islam's holy book, and clashed with the police. The dominant media representation of these protests reduced them to looting and linked Islam to backwardness and terrorism, while the police responded with mass arrests (Salvanou, 2014: 343). Emilia Salvanou takes a penetrating look at the protests, showing the 'complex reality of political assertions and intra-group divisions' among groups who are conventionally categorised as 'Muslim immigrants' (Ibid: 339, 346).

The researcher draws attention to the fact that most of the Muslim community leaders refused to join the protests and some of them were particularly irritated by the participation of parts of the Greek Left and the protestors' simultaneous hoisting of the Qur'an and of placards reading 'No More Unemployment' (Salvanou, 2014: 349, 351). These leaders proposed administrative solutions instead of protests, a politics of compliance that Salvanou describes as 'adaptation to dominant discourses of individuality and neoliberal governmentality' (Ibid: 347, 358). In contrast, the researcher underlines the mass participation of newly arrived undocumented immigrants and argues that 'engaging in radical forms of resistance results from an embodied everyday experience of marginalisation and seclusion, and is not a cultural practice defined by ethnicity or religion' (Ibid: 359). As she continues:

> Even if in the case of the Muslim migrants the religious aspect of their cultural identity was at the forefront of their claim, the engagement was broader: it concerned their political subjectivity *and* the renegotiation of their social position.
>
> (Salvanou, 2014: 346)

Turning to the Pakistani Community, my interview with Javed Aslam revealed key insights concerning his understanding of Islamophobia. He noted the main influences on the development of his thought and his view on the annual Marxism Festival (organised by SEK) in which Aslam has repeatedly participated, often as a speaker on Islamophobia:

> *Concerning my influences, I would say, first of all, the Qur'an and then political science and the society, what the people are actually doing. I try to learn from everything that is useful and apply it in our everyday practice. (…) Every year we attend the Marxism Festival. We learn from the meetings, the debates, the ideas and we try to apply the best of them.*

Aslam related the phenomenon of Islamophobia to imperialism and the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, tracing it back to the US supporting extremist groups in Afghanistan in the 1980s for geopolitical reasons when acting against the Soviet Union (Aslam in Pittas, 2014b). Concerning Islamophobia in Greece, he pointed to the huge number of Muslims in detention centres and the absence of an official mosque, describing his efforts to address this issue in his capacity as a member of the Council for the Integration of Migrants of the Municipality of Athens (CIMMA).

In this context, as opposed to practising a politics of compliance, the Pakistani Community had an organised presence at the May 2009 protests, and together with parts of the Greek Left, [135] linked the religious claim to broader social and political issues.

[135] Participation in the protests in May 2009 spawned debate among the Greek Left and particularly within SYRIZA. For an analysis of this issue, see Lountos (2009).

8.3 Cross-ethnic Solidarities from the Squares Movement to Strike Action

In May 2011, the occupation of Syntagma square in Athens and dozens of squares in other cities across Greece was the beginning of the 'squares' movement', which was the culmination of a year of social unrest against austerity and the dramatic increase of unemployment after the first Greek bailout (May 2010). In continuity with the mass mobilisations in Spain the same period (the 'Indignados' movement) and, before that, the protests in countries, like Egypt and Tunisia (known as the 'Arab Spring'), the 'squares' movement' in Greece lasted for more than two months and left its mark on both national and international level. Commenting on its broader impact, Douzinas and Papaconstantinou (2011) argued that 'direct democracy had returned to its birthplace, changing the meaning of politics' and that Syntagma had been transformed during June 2011 into 'Tahrir square in slow motion', drawing a parallel with the protests in Cairo, Egypt.

However, not everyone agreed on this viewpoint and, indeed, there have been several debates on the interpretation of these events.[136] While it is not possible to do justice to all the many different aspects of these debates in my study, I draw a demarcation line which is methodologically and politically crucial. In particular, I argue that the 'squares' movement' has been a mass and multiform democratic political process that ultimately contributed to the convergence of broader struggles during that period in Greece. In contrast, many have tried to delegitimise this legacy of the 'squares' movement'. More recently, for example, in view of Golden Dawn conviction in October 2020, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis (2020) argued that the 'squares' movement' had directly led to the rise of Golden Dawn.

This is a gross distortion of reality. To begin with, Golden Dawn opposed the 'squares' movement' and publicly denounced it as the 'carnival of the progressives' (Charalabous, 2011). It is true, though,

[136] For the KKE's critical approach to the 'squares' movement', which is opposed to the position I adopt in this thesis, see KKE in Jacobin (2015), available at: https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/09/kke-greece-communist-party-syriza-bailout-memorandum-grexit/ (Accessed: 6 January 2021).

that especially in the movement's early days, there were spontaneous and semi-organised instances of hostility to trade unions and political parties in general and some, indeed, tended towards nationalism, conspiracy theories and anti-immigrant attitudes. The latter mostly assembled in the upper side of Syntagma, which gave a spatial expression in the tension between the 'upper square' and the 'lower square', where a people's assembly has been formed and gradually a more leftist culture prevailed. While a certain distinction between 'upper' and 'lower' square is an indisputable fact, overemphasising the distinction, as Gaitanou (2016) correctly points out, tended to 'ignore the potentialities of a situation where, for the first time, those who participated extended far beyond the fairly narrow spectrum of usual activists'.

In that respect, it is no coincidence that the climax of the occupation of Syntagma Square in Athens coincided with the 48-hour general strike on 28 and 29 June 2011 in which thousands of strikers protested the passing of new austerity measures against tremendous police repression.[137] In fact, this achievement was the outcome of a whole process related to the people's assembly, the structures and initiatives of the 'lower square' and the decisive contribution of those parts of the Left and the anti-authoritarian scene that consciously and effectively intervened in the course of events surrounding the 'squares' movement' (Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos, 2020).

This brings us to the Pakistani immigrants and the role of the Pakistani Community in the 'squares' movement'. When I discussed this topic with Aslam, he drew my attention to the day against racism and xenophobia initiated by the people's assembly on 25 June 2011. This day included political and cultural events promoting solidarity and co-existence between Greek natives and immigrants. Aslam, Macauley and other immigrant activists held speeches, and many immigrants participated in the open discussion organised by the people's assembly. Meanwhile, Pakistani teams staged a cricket match in the main street in front of parliament in the so-called 'upper square' and Pakistani women made henna

[137] The journalist and documentarist Yorgos Avgeropoulos has characterised police repression in this case as 'a constant flirt with death' (Avgeropoulos, 2011).

tattoos for the people in the square (*Eleftherotypia*, 2011). This is how Aslam characterised his impression of that day:

> *The movement that day sent a message to our communities that we are part of the Greek polity. It was so nice! Our people would never imagine they would play cricket in front of the parliament. In practice, people from different countries were together against racism in a mass show of mutual respect and love. Those who were irritated by our participation were a tiny minority.*

These above descriptions point, in my view, to the possibility of what Kouvelakis (2016b) describes as 'an inclusive, multiracial, multicultural, welcoming, and sovereign body politic'.[138] Bringing more evidence supporting this argument, I address the following two examples, which highlight the role of the UIW in key moments of strike action the broader period under research.

Scene 1: On 19 October 2011, the first day of the general strike, more than half a million workers and youth took to the streets, making it one of the largest union demonstrations of the last several decades (Karagiorgou, *et al.* 2011). In the weeks leading up to that strike, the famous slogan 'occupy everything' almost became a reality throughout Greece: more than 300 university departments, 1,000 high schools, tax offices in various neighbourhoods, scores of municipal offices, ministries, courts, landfills and, most importantly, streets were occupied by unions, students, popular committees and more.

In this context, the government and the municipal authorities tried to break the sanitation workers' strike in Athens and criminalise the strike action of the Panhellenic Federation of Employees in Local Authorities (POE-OTA) (POE-OTA, 2011). As many of those hired by private companies as strikebreakers were undocumented immigrants, the UIW issued a statement and declared:

> We will defend the strike of the municipal sanitation workers by all necessary means. We will inform all the immigrant workers that breaking the strike is a dirty and unethical act against the

[138] In contrast, Kotouza notes that 'it is hard to interpret this day as much more than a gesture of friendship by a section of the movement to immigrants, who were taken by definition to be external to the movement' (Kotouza, 2019: 122).

> workers who are fighting for dignity and justice, for their families and their lives. We will stop all those who don't realize that their place is within the worker's movement and the General Strike in 19 and 20 October.
>
> (UIW in Thoidou and Pittas, 2013)

In addition, a delegation of immigrant representatives, including Aslam in his capacity as president of UIW met with the president of the POE-OTA and expressed the solidarity and support of the immigrant workers to the strike.

Scene 2: At Christmas 2014, when most of the Greek Left was impatiently waiting for the imminent parliamentary elections, 150 workers from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Albania begun an indefinite strike in the General Recycling SA plant in the Aspropyrgos area, claiming their salaries had not been paid for eight months (Stamoulis, 2015, Keep Talking Greece, 2015). Police violence on the picket line led to the arrests of dozens of immigrant workers, including Aslam and three Greek members of SEK who stood in solidarity.[139] It is remarkable that when the UIW called for the solidarity of the labour movement, the POE-OTA was one of the first federations that responded to the call and supported the immigrant workers.

8.4 A Movement in-the-Making: An Anti-racist—Anti-fascist Perspective on the 2012 Summer Nightmare

An outstanding aspect of the activities of the Pakistani Community and the UIW after 2010 are related to the rise of racism in general and the criminal organisation Golden Dawn in particular. In a nutshell, the Pakistani Community and the UIW 'served as a de facto monitor of hate groups and far-right violence, urging victims to file police reports and organising anti-fascist rallies alongside Greek leftist groups' (Strickland, 2018). The specific strategy outlined by Aslam had four central pillars: class unity,

[139] While detained at the local police station the immigrant workers were constantly chanting 'Workers united never defeated' (InformationLibre, 2015). All the protesters were later acquitted of the charges.

visibility, motivation and strategic litigation. Based on this strategy, these were the essential elements of the response of the Pakistani Community, KEERFA and UIW after each racist attack: Immigrant mobilising on the street alongside the Greek Left and trade unions, filing complaints and denouncing the Greek police, who most often dismissed them, and organising press conferences and media interventions in the Greek and international media.

14. The Pakistani Community at the anti-fascist rally in the neighbourhood of Nikaia, 5 July 2012 (Kalodoukas, 2012).

As Aslam explained in our interview, a key aspect of their strategies to address the rise of racist violence was creating neighbourhood committees with KEERFA. These committees gave the immigrants a network of contacts, including both immigrant and Greek activists, who acted as focal points for the anti-fascist movement. He underlined that they concentrated their efforts in preventive strategies with the aim *'to organise beforehand instead of waiting the fascists to hit us'*.

In what follows, I briefly detail a highlight of this strategy in the neighbourhood of Nikaia after the June 2012 parliamentary elections. On 23 June 2012, 50 Golden Dawn members, riding motorbikes and armed with heavy wooden poles, roared through Nikaia to telegraph their new power following

their electoral results and their entrance to the Greek Parliament. The men careened around the main square of Agios Nikolaos, some brandishing shields emblazoned with swastika symbols, and delivered an ultimatum to the Pakistani immigrants who run small businesses in the area (Alderman, 2012). As reported in *The New York Times*, the Golden Dawners told the Pakistani: 'You're the cause of Greece's problems. You have seven days to close or we'll burn your shop—and we'll burn you.' It is striking that, according to the same article, when the immigrants called the police for help, the officer told them they did not have time to come to the aid of immigrants like them (Alderman, 2012).

The answer of the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement was immediate. As a matter of fact, at the Pakistani Community's initiative, the local KEERFA chapter and the Piraeus Open School for the Immigrants called an open meeting in the municipality two days after the ultimatum. In a room packed with around 500 participants, most of them Pakistani immigrants from the neighbourhood, the meeting decided to organise an anti-fascist rally in the Agios Nikolaos square (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2012b; Thoidou, 2018). With the intention of spreading the anti-fascist message and breaking through immigrants' fear, the walls of Nikaia were covered with posters in Greek and Urdu, while immigrant and native activists toured the neighbourhood with a megaphone, calling for people to isolate the fascists and attend the rally.

The day Golden Dawn's ultimatum ended, dozens of Pakistanis, along with Greek anti-fascists from KEERFA and other organisations, created 'shield[s] of solidarity' for the Pakistani shopkeepers against the fascist threat (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2012b). Five days later, on 5 July, 2,000 anti-fascists gave their response to the ultimatum. The rally was supported by almost all of the organisations belonging to the Greek Left and the anti-racist movement. In this remarkable moment of unity in the fight against Golden Dawn, Pakistani immigrants took the lead and the Pakistani Community led the march after a passionate speech by Javed Aslam. The protesters passed the Nikaia police station, denouncing the complicity of the Greek police in racist crimes, and passed the Golden Dawn offices shouting 'Shut down the offices of the criminal organisation' and 'Never again fascism'. The local coordinator of

KEERFA identifies this rally as an example of ‘how you save lives from racist attacks’ (Thoidou, 2018).

To contextualise this example, the following background information is crucial. Nikaia is a suburb in the southwestern part of Athens, near Piraeus, and a working-class neighbourhood severely hit by the 2008 crisis and unemployment. Golden Dawn leadership managed to build one of its most notorious local chapters in Nikaia, which it praised as a ‘model’—this chapter was later related to the murder of the Greek rapper Pavlos Fyssas and to numerous other criminal activities across Greece (Kampagiannis, 2017; 2020a). While the reasons Golden Dawn managed to grow strong in Nikaia and other working-class neighbourhoods exceed the scope of this research, the aforementioned findings disrupt the narrative of a linear, almost unavoidable advance of neo-Nazi forces and highlight the ability to stop them through the organised strength of the mass movement and the united struggle between immigrant and native workers.

Especially in Nikaia, it appears that the Left and anti-fascist movements, which were deeply rooted in the neighbourhood, invoked memories of the past in their attempt to arouse the anti-fascist sentiments of the vast majority of the population. Nikaia, also known as Kokkinia, has a refugee history, as refugees from the Asia Minor coast arrived there after the war of 1922; it also has an anti-fascist history linked to the resistance during WWII. The ‘Kokkinia Blockade’ is the most characteristic historical site, where mass executions were carried out in 1944 by the occupying Nazi troops of Germany. In this context, the following highlight from the anti-fascist rally of 5 July 2012 stands out. When the immigrant-led march reached the Kokkinia Blockade memorial, the participants—immigrant and native alike—stopped and paid tribute to communists and anti-fascists who were executed during WWII. This remarkable moment indicates how the national anti-fascist histories can become part of the collective memory of the multi-ethnic working class.

Turning to the general situation during the summer of 2012, the rise in racist attacks related to the escalation of Golden Dawn's activities is striking. In just a two-week period in June, more than 60 incidents were reported to the Pakistani Community and KEERFA (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2012a). In one of these cases, which was later part of the Golden Dawn trial, the Perama hit squad attacked a family of Egyptian fishermen at their house during the night and attempted to murder one of them. To understand the high stakes of this summer, this rise in racist attacks should be understood in the context of institutional racism, as exemplified by the mass anti-immigrant police operation that began throughout Greece in the early days of August.

The operation's code name was 'Xenios Zeus', actually a euphemism, using the image of the God of hospitality in order to 'beautify' 'one of the country's biggest crackdowns yet on suspected illegal immigrants' (Smith, 2012). Ovenden, who was in Greece during that period, describes how 'heavily armoured policemen appeared out of nowhere on street corners and set up what felt like the checkpoints of an occupying power' (Ovenden, 2015a: 82). Notably, the Greek Ombudsman (2013) considered the operation problematic from a constitutional point of view, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants expressed 'regret for the "sweep operations" which have led to widespread detention of migrants in different parts of the country, many of whom have lived and worked in Greece for years' (UN OHCHR, 2012).

To complement the picture, it is important to consider that in 2012, the month of Ramadan started on sundown of 19 July. As a result, in the midst of Ramadan, the Muslim residents of Athens —a city without an official mosque at the time— had to contend with a mass police operation based on religious and ethnic profiling (Human Rights Watch, 2013) alongside attacks against their prayer halls by Golden Dawn members. This explains why the attack against the unofficial mosque in Rendi, near Nikaia, on 11 August proved to be the last straw. The next day, at the initiative of Aslam and a group of Pakistani activists from Nikaia, an open assembly of Pakistani immigrants decided to organise a

rally in Athens' city centre. Pakistani immigrants all over Athens mobilised *en masse* to work for the success of that rally, which made history on 24 August.

15. Mass antiracist-antifascist demonstration of the Pakistani Community at Syntagma square, 24 August 2012 (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2019).

That immigrant participation was the biggest in Greece's recent history, since immigrants comprised the vast majority of the approximately 10,000 participants. Mini-assemblies took place in several neighbourhoods outside unofficial mosques, and collective efforts were made to facilitate transportation and protection from police harassment. The march started at Omonoia Square and ended in front of parliament at Syntagma Square. Protesters were hanging the flags of Pakistan and Afghanistan near the flags of KEERFA, SEK and ANTARSYA. Hundreds of immigrants wearing blue headbands participated in the safety teams organised by the Pakistani Community. The Pakistani Community members held placards reading 'Punishment for the fascists who attacked mosques and insulted the prophet and the Qur'ran', 'Workers united never defeated' and 'No to Islamophobia'.

Ovenden, who participated in that rally, described hearing chants of 'God is great' and 'Smash the fascists and the memorandum-mongers' at the same time (Ovenden, 2015a: 84). As the SEK newspaper reported, 'when the mass rally approached the Syntagma square, it awakened memories of the popular assemblies of the indignant movement the previous year' (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2012c). In the spirit of this constructive parallelism between the 2011 'squares' movement' and the above rally, I shall argue that the latter could be identified as the movement of indignant non-citizens.[140]

A deeper understanding of this great achievement requires a closer examination of the debates among Pakistani immigrants ahead of the August rally. I claim that what Salvanou (2014: 346) has suggested about the 2009 'Qur'an protests' is still valid in this particular case—that is 'the complex reality of political assertions and intra-group divisions' among the Muslim residents of Athens. The thorniest issues were again whether their demands would be restricted to religious issues and whether the Greek Left would be invited to participate in the rally (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2012c). These issues became the subject of an intense discussion in the organising meetings ahead of the August rally, which were massively attended by the Pakistanis of Athens. Ultimately, the majority in these meetings adopted a broader agenda and worked towards unity with the Greek Left and the broader anti-racist and anti-fascist movement.

As Aslam explained, in our interview, '*the accumulation of experiences of joint struggles and the success of the rally in Nikaia proved decisive for this outcome'*. Finally, the weakest point of the rally was the scarce participation of the Greek Left—with the exception of KEERFA and some more organisations. As Aslam said on the day:

[140] The rally is featured in the documentary video *Το ποτάμι της οργής [The river of rage]*. See Kalodoukas (2013), available at: https://vimeo.com/48178370 (Accessed: 10 November 2020).

> I wish more Greeks were here. And then they would see that we are not the problem. We are lions roaring against the same government that is oppressing them. But whoever else is here will continue to be here.
>
> (Aslam in Ovenden, 2015a: 84)

8.5 The Existential Dilemma of the Pakistani Community and the 2012 Presidential Elections

In his analysis of the class divisions in the Pakistani Community, Mufti (2014b) notes that while there is also a relatively small middle-class contingent, the majority of its members are mostly young, male, single, uneducated and unskilled, and, especially in the case of the newly arrived, undocumented. Mufti finds that the severe proletarianisation of this workers' population produced strong collectivist political instincts, as opposed to most middle-class Pakistanis with leadership ambitions, who preferred 'the traditional colonial practice of playing the sycophant with powerful official patrons' (Ibid). Further, Mufti points out that although Aslam is from a middle-class background, he proved capable of proposing a strategy that could appeal to the Pakistani workers who repeatedly elected him based on a 'realistic sense of what is required of their representatives in this foreign land' (Mufti, 2014b).

Even more, Mufti concludes that the struggle of the Pakistani Community of Greece 'could be at the vanguard of the Europe-wide immigrants' struggle' and notes that it needs to be made more visible in the other European countries, through all available platforms (Mufti, 2014a). Mufti summarises Aslam's strategy as a 'politics of alliance with the Left and confrontation of the Right and elements of the state' (Ibid). With this in mind, the following excerpt from my interview with Aslam is illuminating:

> *Since 2005, the Greek Left has proved in practice what it means to support our people. And when someone is there for you and feels your pain, this creates a strong bond. Sometimes, when I mobilise my people, some of them find it difficult to see their place in demonstrations for issues seemingly far from their immediate concerns. But little by little there was a real change in how our people see the Left. (…) Of course, there are also those in the Community who see collective action as pointless and dangerous. These people believe in capitalism and expensive restaurants and this way of life.*

This prompts the question, what were the proposals of those who believed in capitalism and expensive restaurants in terms of dealing with the fascist threat? In this life-and-death matter, it appears that many of those Pakistanis who opposed Aslam demonstrated 'a dangerous lack of understanding of the nature of their enemies' and 'proposed negotiations with the Golden Dawn to find a modus vivendi' (Mufti, 2012).

In light of this, the stakes of the Pakistani Community presidential elections in October 2012 were very high. Aslam did not run for re-election and supported Malik Abdul Majeed, who defended the legacy of his leadership. The electoral process, which was contested and held twice due to problems with the list of voters, attracted a huge turnout of more than 5,500 Pakistani immigrants from all over Greece. Malik Abdul Majeed won by 500 votes over the second candidate. The most active supporters of the winning candidate were the Pakistani members of KEERFA, some of whom have also joined SEK and ANTARSYA. By defending the legacy of the outgoing president, they were in fact defending the achievement of their collective efforts. As one of them stated after the results:

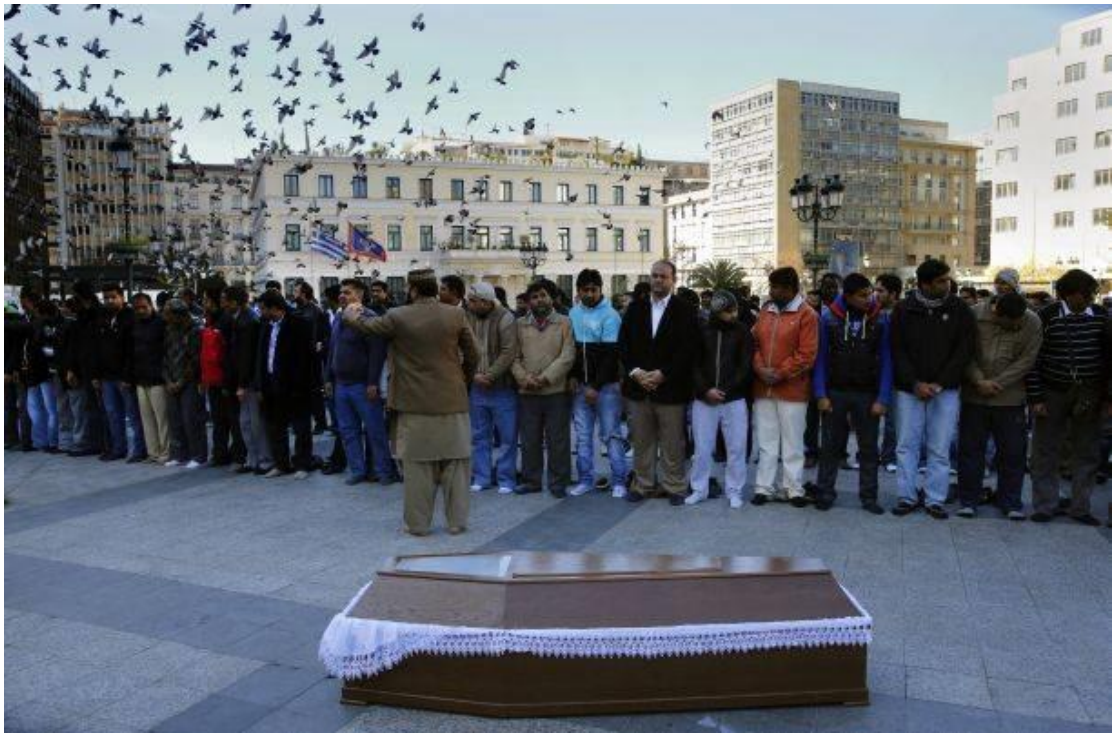
> As opposed to other candidates who wanted to isolate the Pakistani Community, in our list we argue that we should fight alongside the Greek workers, together in the picket line, together in the demonstration. Today, it's a great victory and we are really happy.
>
> (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2012d)

At the same time, during autumn of 2012, Golden Dawn hit squads were targeting immigrant neighbourhoods almost daily all over Athens and other cities as well. Despite the efforts of parts of the Greek Left and the movement's mass organisations, the level of anti-racist and anti-fascist consciousness in Greek society was inadequate to address the phenomenon. In addition, as Aslam explained, police officers were often arresting and beating Pakistani immigrants as a form of collective punishment for the demonstrations. Worse, local demonstrations denouncing racist attacks were often followed by anti-immigrant pogroms held at night by Golden Dawn.

This unbearable situation raised the question of whether mobilising tactics and an anti-fascist strategy could, indeed, save lives from racist attacks. Thanassis Kampagiannis, a KEERFA lawyer steadily providing legal support to the Pakistani Community members that period, aptly characterised this in our interview as an *'existential dilemma of the Pakistani Community'* and added that, to his credit, Aslam never gave an inch on this strategy. The following excerpt from my interview with Aslam is illuminating on this point:

> *When I found my people half-dead with broken arms, broken legs, head injuries and destroyed houses full of blood, I felt so much pain. But the important thing is that your hands and legs never stop. You feel much pain but you have to act. (…) Golden Dawners have threatened me so many times that they would kill me at night, cut my throat and so on. But I was not afraid. Maintaining a firm position is decisive. If we are not afraid, their main strategy fails.*

8.6 When Golden Dawn Hit Squads Murdered Luqman and Fyssas



16. Mourners pray over the coffin of Shehzad Luqman during a funeral ceremony in front of Athens city hall, 19 January 2013 (*Eleftherotypia*, 2014).

On 17 January 2013, the Pakistani worker Shehzad Luqman was murdered in Petralona by two members of Golden Dawn. As he did every night, Luqman departed Peristeri on his bicycle at 2.30 am in order to arrive almost an hour later at the farmers' market where he worked in Petralona. However, at about 3.20 am, while Luqman was on his way to the farmer's market, the Golden Dawn members, both riding on the same motorbike, blocked his path on the road and then stabbed him seven times, killing him. Thanks to witness accounts, the police arrested the two perpetrators, still carrying butterfly knives covered in blood, that same night.

Over the next few days, all the parties of the Left and the mass organisations of the movement organised several rallies demanding punishment for the perpetrators of this racist crime (Dama, 2013; 902.gr, 2013a). On 19 January, the international day of anti-fascist action known as 'Athens, Anti-fascist City' initiated by KEERFA some months earlier, marked the beginning of the justice campaign for Luqman.[141] One of the strongest moments of the anti-fascist rally held on that day at Omonoia Square was the minute's silence in memory of Luqman and all the victims of fascism (Camera Stylo, 2013; *Socialist Worker*, 2013). Earlier the same morning, the Pakistani Community received the body of Luqman and held the Janaza funeral prayers outside the grand building of the municipal council of Athens. The mourners, led by Javed Aslam, marched a few hundred metres and entered Omonoia Square to cheers and tears (Ovenden, 2015b).

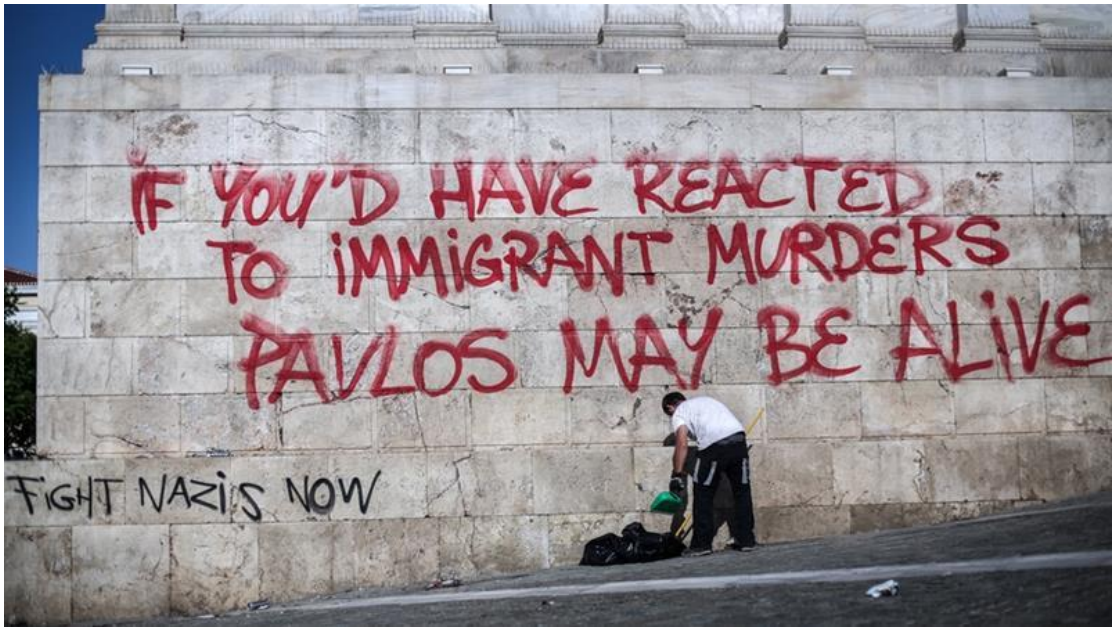
[141] Even parts of the Left that had previously been critical of the initiative 'Athens, Anti-fascist City' realised the urgency of the situation after Luqman's murder and acted accordingly. For example, KKE representatives heavily criticised the initiative (902.gr, 2012) and clearly stated that they would not co-organise nor participate in the rally (*Rizospastis*, 2013a: 20). However, KKE members intervened in the rally and distributed leaflets with the title 'Proletarians of all the countries unite' in several languages (*Rizospastis*, 2013b: 19). In addition, the Immigrant Secretariat of PAME had met with the Pakistani Community and expressed the solidarity of the class-oriented movement with the Pakistani workers targeted by Golden Dawn (Ibid). On different grounds, other forces of the Left were critical of how KEERFA took the initiative 'Athens, Anti-fascist City' in the first place and were reluctant to support it (Xekinima, 2013) However, after Luqman's murder, all these organisations (e.g., SYRIZA, DIKTYO, the 'Expel racism' movement, Xekinima) mobilised their forces and actively supported the rally.

The Pakistani Community's main banner, which was held aloft by those leading the march, read 'Punishment for the fascist murderers of Shehzad Luqman'. An international wave of anti-fascist protests in dozens of cities in Europe, the US, Latin America and Australia occurred that day, with protestors sending solidarity messages to the anti-fascists in Greece and holding pictures of Luqman in different parts of the world (e.g. outside the Greek Consulate in Chicago, US) (Anti-Fascist Network, 2013; *Ergatiki Alilegii*, 2013a; Kopycisnky, 2013).

Official statements from the Greek government and the Ministry of Public Order reproduced the 'theory of the isolated incident' and underestimated the racist attitudes 'as a marginal phenomenon in the Greek society' (Greek Ministry of Public Order, 2013; Government of Greece, 2013). In contrast, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe called for urgent action regarding the increase in racist and other hate crimes after his visit to Greece at the end of January 2013 (Muižnieks, 2013). Due to mounting pressure, both grassroots and institutional, the government proceeded to create anti-racist police units with a view to undertaking an in-depth investigation of racist attacks (Greek Ombudsman, 2013).[142] Yet the pressure was not strong enough to prompt a paradigm shift at that point.

The most alarming sign of the culture of impunity during that period was the investigation into Luqman's murder. The possibility of a racist motive for the murder was not thoroughly investigated. In fact, the police and prosecutors accepted the argument of the accused, which was that they attacked the victim following a verbal altercation because he was obstructing their motorbike with his bicycle (Amnesty International, 2014). In light of these developments, a strategic move by the Pakistani Community and KEERFA was their decision to establish a legal team to represent Luqman's family in the trial and prevent a potential cover-up (KEERFA, 2013).

[142] As part of these investigations, the case of the attack in a barbershop in Metamorphosi during September 2012 was investigated and one of the perpetrators was brought to justice.



17. Graffiti on the wall of the historical building of the University of Athens (Propylaia) (Paleologos, 2017).

On 18 September 2013, Pavlos Fyssas, a 34-year-old anti-fascist rapper known by the alias 'Killah P' was spotted by Golden Dawn members at a café in his home neighbourhood of Keratsini, a suburb of Piraeus. Under the orders of Golden Dawn leadership, the Nikaia hit squad arrived at the scene equipped with batons, knuckledusters and knives, attacking Fyssas and his friends; a member of the hit squad then stabbed Fyssas three times, killing him (Kampagiannis, 2015). Almost a week earlier, Golden Dawn had attacked the communist trade unionists of PAME in the ship-building zone of Perama (Poulikogiannis, 2016).[143] Based on his in-depth knowledge of the investigative material in the trial of Golden Dawn, Kampagiannis confirms that in September 2013, the group devised a strategic plan, coded as 'the Greek September' to come closer to power through the terror of the hit squads.

The murder of Fyssas marked a turning point for the anti-fascist movement as a whole. The response in the streets was an impressive show of force and set a benchmark for what it takes to respond to an

[143] Testimony of Poulikogiannis (hearings 97–101) of the Golden Dawn trial. See references (Poulikogiannis, 2016a-e).

actual fascist threat. All the forces of the movement, despite their different approaches and tactics, were capable of rising to the occasion and contributing to the spontaneous outrage, especially the youth. On 24–25 September, the 48-hour public-sector strike provided an opportunity for a convergence of forces. On the second day of the strike, despite the reluctance of the trade union bureaucracy, who refused to participate,[144] tens of thousands of anti-fascists took the lead and marched towards Golden Dawn Headquarters. More than 100 anti-fascist demonstrations were held all over Greece with widespread participation over a period of few weeks (ACAP, 2013; Roos, 2013). As Kampagiannis insightfully comments, the movement in September 2013 'brought to the surface the risk of a new December 2008 uprising' (Kampagiannis, 2015).

It was under the pressure of this movement that the Greek state was forced to act against Golden Dawn. The head of Golden Dawn and more than a dozen members, including MPs, were arrested at the end of September 2012, marking the beginning of an intense investigation of Golden Dawn activities. Indicative of the impact of these arrests on immigrant communities is the following excerpt from one of Aslam's media interventions that period:

> The past few days have felt like a breath of fresh air for Greeks and immigrants alike. When it comes to the immigrants, they definitely feel emboldened. (…) However, we can't rush into making grand statements—we have to wait to see what will actually happen. It might have all been for show, we'll see. We hope for the best, but we are prepared for the worst.
>
> (Aslam in Kotsoni, 2013)

In his capacity as president of the Pakistani Community and the UIW, Aslam was among those who were called by the Supreme Court prosecutor in the context of this investigation. As Aslam described in our interview:

> *My testimony lasted for hours and they called me three times in total. The prosecutor was impressed by the material I had submitted concerning Golden Dawn activities and asked me how I could be so well organised. I explained that since 2010, day by day, I was bringing our injured people to the hospitals and struggled to report attacks and file complaints. During all*

[144] Marching towards the Golden Dawn headquarters or not was also an internal debate in SYRIZA.

> *this period, I knew that a day would come that all this information would be valuable. That's why we carefully kept a record of everything, including date, time, place and description of every attack.*

While Aslam was more than happy that these voices were at last being heard by the judicial authorities, it was with sorrow that he noted, *'if the crackdown against Golden Dawn had taken place in 2010, around 900 racist attacks could have been prevented'*. As he underlined in our interview, what happened in September 2013 was the culmination of all the efforts of the anti-fascist movement, immigrant communities and the left over the previous years:

> *It gave us more courage to continue fighting especially in the trial of the murderers of Luqman that was approaching. Our people felt that justice could be served and, Alhamdulillah, the fascists will go to jail.*

8.7 A Foretaste of the Golden Dawn Trial: The Achievements of the Justice Campaign for Luqman

On 18 December 2013, the trial of the Luqman's murderers began in the Mixed Jury Court of Athens. Kampagiannis and Papadakis, two of the civil action lawyers for Luqman's family, whom I interviewed, significantly contributed to my understanding of the trial's high stakes. Making no reference to racist motive, the indictment stated that Luqman was murdered after an argument for inconsequential reasons. As Kampagiannis pointed out, it was very difficult for the judicial authorities in Greece to realise the specificities of a racially motivated crime. Therefore, the main task of the civil action lawyers was to provide the Mixed Jury Court with all the necessary evidence to leave no room for doubt that Luqman's murder was racially motivated.

Five months later, this task was accomplished. According to Kampagiannis, in 'an impressive U-turn' at the end of the trial, 'the state prosecutor was obliged to admit that Shehzad's murder was due to his ethnic origin' (Kampagiannis, 2014). In a unanimous (four jurors and three judges) verdict, the accused

were sentenced to life in prison with the aggravating circumstance of racist motive under Article 79 (3) of the Greek Penal Code. The court found that 'the offence was carried out due to hate based on the differences in the victim's appearance, his religion and ethnic origin' (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). This was the first time a Mixed Jury Court recognised the racist motive behind a crime committed against an immigrant. The Pakistani Community and KEERFA had been the backbone of the justice campaign throughout the trial.

Aslam's testimony significantly contributed to a deeper understanding of the racist motive behind the murder. A strategic move on the part of the Pakistani Community and KEERFA was the financial and organisational support they gave Luqman's parents, in order to travel from Pakistan to Greece and attend the trial. Khadim Hussain and Sughran Bibi testified in court, attended the court sessions, marched in the streets and toured with KEERFA all over Greece to share the story of their family, demanding justice for their son and becoming the voice of thousands of parents in Pakistan who were worried about the situation of their children in Greece. In an exemplary gesture of building cross-ethnic solidarities, Luqman's parents visited Keratsini in early 2014 and placed flowers at the scene of Fyssas' murder, sending the message that the families of Golden Dawn victims would stand together (KEERFA, 2014a). Luqman's trial gave a foretaste of this and, in a way, laid the groundwork for what was to come in the trial of Golden Dawn. As Sughran Bibi summarises it:

> This Court decision gave us courage. Of course, nothing and nobody can bring me back my son. The meaning of the verdict is that this should never happen again, that no other mother will lose her child. This is what matters.
>
> (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2014: 5)

8.8 The Victory of the Anti-fascist Movement in the Trial of Golden Dawn

In February 2015, after the end of the investigation into Golden Dawn, the judicial council of the Athens Court of Appeals announced that 69 individuals would be tried in what is described as the

‘biggest trial of a fascist criminal organisation since the Nuremberg trial’ (Kampagiannis in Horner, 2016) and ‘a major event for democracy in Greece and beyond’ (Christopoulos, 2018). Three cases were brought together in the Golden Dawn trial: the murder of Pavlos Fyssas; the attack on PAME trade unionists in Perama; and the attack on the home of the Egyptian fishermen, also in Perama. Further, Golden Dawn was accused of operating as a criminal organisation under Article 187 of the Greek Penal Code. According to the indictment (215/2015):

> Golden Dawn’s criminal activities aimed at the violent treatment of foreigners, opponents and purported ideological rivals, and by extension at the dissemination and enforcement of its political theories and ideals through the local branches. At all times, senior members of Golden Dawn’s hierarchy directed these activities on the basis of an organised plan executed by units known as hit squads.
>
> (in Psarras, 2015: 10)

18. One of the Egyptian fishermen identifies a leading Golden Dawn member as one of those who attacked them in their home in Perama in June 2012 (Fragkou, 2016).

The trial began in April 2015 and the Athens Court of Appeals delivered its judgement after 453 court sessions. My interviews with Kampagiannis and Papadakis, who represented the Egyptian fishermen, attendance at 30 court sessions during fieldwork and examination of the daily reports of Golden Dawn

Watch initiative was a learning process that significantly contributed to my understanding of the whole process. I particularly focused on the interaction between the civil action lawyers, the victims' families, the immigrant communities, the communist trade unionists and the broader anti-fascist movement.

On 7 October 2020, in their historic ruling the three judges found all seven members of Golden Dawn's 'political council' guilty of directing a criminal organisation. Eleven other former Golden Dawn MPs and most of the rest of the defendants[145] were found guilty of participating in a criminal organisation. This great political and legal achievement, which has far-reaching consequences, raises issues that require collective and interdisciplinary research in the near future. Contributing to these issues, the following points present insights into the trial's legacy.

The legacy of the civil action lawyers: 'The fruits of our labour in the service of the movement'

In October 2013, KEERFA's lawyers made a statement 'for a civil action by the antifascist movement in the trial of Golden Dawn', known also as the JailGoldenDawn initiative (JailGoldenDawn, 2013). At that point, KEERFA's lawyers had not yet reached out to the Egyptian fishermen; the investigations into Golden Dawn had just begun and judicial authorities had not identified which cases, if any, would be tried together. To use the words of Bensaïd (2009), this statement served as the 'regulating strategic hypothesis' that shaped subsequent developments. The principles on which the anti-fascist movement's civil action was based contributed to a legal strategy capable of evading the trap of liberal legalism without falling into the trap of legal nihilism. If the former rejected mobilisation tactics inside and outside the trial based on the liberals' blind trust in the rule of law, the latter argued that the movement had no battle to fight within a state arena—that is, the courtroom.

Before the trial began in April 2015, the KKE-affiliated Democratic Rally for Freedom and Solidarity also made a statement 'for the civil action of the labor-popular movement' and announced legal

[145] Among the defendants who were found guilty of participating in the criminal organisation were also the two murderers of Luqman.

representation for the trade unionists of PAME in the Golden Dawn trial (*Rizospastis*, 2015b: 3). Despite their different political affiliations, the JailGoldenDawn initiative and the Democratic Rally for Freedom and Solidarity shared a common understanding of the stakes of the trial. After the civil action lawyers were legally recognised, a critical stage at the beginning of the trial, the three different legal teams representing Fyssas' family, the Egyptian fishermen and PAME trade unionists gradually started cooperating closely.

The fact that the three cases were tried together presented the opportunity for a convergence of forces. The amount of work on the part of the civil action lawyers was huge and demanded a high level of cooperation. This work involved examining hundreds of witnesses and going through thousands of pages and a 1.5-terabyte case file of evidence. Based on mutual respect, joint legal strategies and a sense of historical duty, the ties between the civil action lawyers, which were forged over time, marked an achievement with wider implications for the future. Their main task was to provide the Athens Court of Appeals with evidence that would leave no room for doubt that Golden Dawn was a criminal organisation operating in the guise of a political party.

Based on their investigative material, the civil action lawyers disclosed Golden Dawn's secret relationships with parts of the business world and the state apparatus. Despite the overwhelming evidence of criminality, the state prosecutor proposed acquitting Golden Dawn's leadership and cadres of the charges of running a criminal organisation. Fortunately, the three judges did not follow the prosecutor's proposal, which was heavily criticised (Kampagiannis, 2020a; KKE, 2019) and sparked the anti-fascist campaign 'They are not innocent'.

My interviews with Papadakis and Kampagiannis bolstered my understanding of strategic litigation, which in this case is identified as a legal struggle subordinated to the needs, priorities and strategies of the anti-fascist movement. Kampagiannis revealed the Gramscian framework underpinning the legal

techniques in the united-front strategy to which they aspired.[146] Papadakis dedicated his concluding statement to the memory of Hans Litten[147] and the struggles of the lawyers defending democratic rights and freedoms across the world (Papadakis, 2020: 238). In our interview, he offered critical insights into Verge's 'strategies of rupture', pointing to the latter's restriction of disruptive strategies to specific legal techniques in the courtroom. As Papadakis underlined, the most important task for the movement lawyers is to win the arguments outside the courtroom where the people's verdict is at stake. As a matter of fact, all three legal teams contributed to this important task. If half of the heart of the civil action was in the courtroom, the other half was always in the streets.

The legacy of the immigrants: 'Anger bigger than fear'

When KEERFA's lawyers reached out Abouzid Embarak —one of the Egyptian fishermen— and proposed offering them court representation free of charge, it was initially difficult for him to trust them. In June 2012, during the night attack at the house of the Egyptian fishermen, 20 armed Golden Dawn members spotted Embarak sleeping on the roof and assaulted him, resulting in a double fracture of his lower jaw and nasal bones (Kampagiannis, 2020b). When the lawyers approached him, Embarak was still confused, thinking that 'the Greeks' had tried to kill him. As Kampagiannis explains, the solidarity movement helped Embarak and the other Egyptian fishermen realise that those who attacked them so brutally were not 'the Greeks', but a racist, nationalist, Nazi organisation (Kampagiannis,

[146] Kampagiannis' concluding statement in the Golden Dawn trial inspired the play *With the Bees or the Wolves*, an artistic attempt to perform his speech as a stage act.

[147] Hans Litten (1903–1938) was a left-wing lawyer who represented opponents of the Nazis at important political trials between 1929 and 1932. In a trial of 1931, in which four Nazi storm troopers stood accused of criminal assault and attempted murder, Litten requested the presence of Adolf Hitler as a witness. What followed was a brilliant and merciless three-hour cross-examination of Hitler. When the Nazis seized power, Litten was one of the first arrested and the following five years experienced the brutality of concentration camps, including Sonnenburg, Dachau and Buchenwald. The Nazis hated him because he was a Jew, a passionate anti-fascist and the lawyer who put Hitler on the witness stand. Litten was subject to hard labor, prolonged interrogations, beatings, and torture. He hanged himself in Dachau concentration camp in 1938 (Hett 2008).

2020a: 220). Despite their fear, as expressed in their testimonies,[148] and the 'sustained verbal assault' to which they were subjected by Golden Dawn's lawyers (Ovenden, 2016), the Egyptian fishermen appeared and testified before the court. As Embarak later stated, 'my anger was bigger than my fear' (Embarak in Antonopoulos, 2019).

Another crucial element of the trial's immigrant participation was the testimonies from immigrant representatives, including the presidents of the Pakistani Community (Aslam 2017),[149] the Muslim Association (Elghandour, 2017)[150] and the African Communities (Salum, 2017; Khadim, 2017).[151] As Aslam asserted in his own testimony: 'I understood what racism means before 2010, when Golden Dawners were simply beating us up and called us trash, while after 2011, when the stabbings started, I learned what fascism means' (Aslam in Aslam and Salum, 2017).

The legacy of the mother of Pavlos Fyssas: 'We are the children of Magda Fyssa'

It is hard to examine the developments related to the Golden Dawn trial and the movement without considering the role of Magda Fyssa, the mother of Pavlos Fyssas. Like Luqman's parents, Fyssa led demonstrations and joined and organised several anti-fascist events to spread the message and honour the memory of her son and all the victims of Golden Dawn. With her motivation (she attended almost all of the 453 court sessions), her grief, her anger and her courage, she made a major breakthrough in raising general anti-racist and anti-fascist consciousness in Greek society. Her public appeal to the

[148] Testimonies from the Egyptian fishermen in the Golden Dawn trial: Abouzide Embarak (hearings 83-84) (Embarak, 2016a; 2016b), Abou Hamed Saad (hearings 85-86) (Saad, 2016a; 2016b), Abou Hamed Mohammed (hearings 89-90) (Mohammed, 2016a; 2016b).
[149] Testimony of Javed Aslam at the Golden Dawn trial (hearing 132) (Aslam and Salum, 2017).
[150] Testimony of the president of the Muslim Association of Greece, Naim Elghandour, at the Golden Dawn trial (hearing 134).
[151] Testimonies of the former president of the Tanzanian community in Greece, Francis Salum (hearing 132) and the president of African Communities in Amerikis Square in Athens, Seck Khadim (hearing 130), respectively.

Greek president and prime minister in which she asked to transfer the trial location to the ceremony hall of the Athens Court of Appeals was critical to ensuring the public nature of the event.[152]

With her initiatives, she brought together the different elements of the anti-fascist movement and contributed to constructing 'unity of the diverse'. Her active support of the justice campaigns for Topaloudi, a victim of femicide in 2018, and the LGBTQI+ and HIV activist Zak Kostopoulos, who was lynched to death in Athens in September 2018, highlight the potential 'convergence of struggles' after the Golden Dawn trial. Finally, Kampagiannis points out how important it was to the Egyptian fishermen that Fyssa was present in the courtroom during their testimonies and embraced them after they had been on the stand (Kampagiannis, 2020a: 221). As the fishermen put it, summarising the general mood of the movement, 'We are the children of Magda Fyssa' (in Baskakis, 2016).

The legacy of the anti-fascist movement: 'This is our democratic wall'

19. Antifascist rally outside Athens Appeals Court on the day of the verdict in the Golden Dawn trial, 7 October 2020 (902.gr, 2020).

[152] Before 2017, the trial took place far from Athens' city centre, in a small room inside Korydallos Prisons. The transfer of the trial location was a central demand of all three legal teams and the broader anti-fascist movement. The 2017 transfer facilitated public attendance at the court sessions.

If a picture could ever capture the meaning of a Gramscian-inspired united-front strategy, then the anti-fascist assembly on the day of the verdict is an illustrative example. As Kampagiannis said of the thousands who gathered: 'This is our democratic wall. They did not pass today. And they shall never pass' (in Ovenden, 2020). I suggest that what Sotiris (2010: 207) notes about the December 2008 uprising could apply here too. The October 2020 anti-fascist rally offers a glimpse of a possible future popular alliance or a potential counter-hegemonic bloc.

While many —including politicians, who were actually part of the problem— claimed the victory against Golden Dawn, this belongs to the joint efforts of the lawyers, the victims' families, the trade unionists, the immigrant communities, and the actual movement that had confronted Golden Dawn during previous years. It is the anti-fascist movement that forced the criminal organisation to shut down most of its local branches, especially after Golden Dawn lost all its parliamentary seats in the general election of 2019.

While I chose to focus more on the achievements of the Pakistani Community and KEERFA here, it is important to note that all the interviews with immigrant activists shed light on different aspects of the anti-fascist movement as a whole,[153] such as the Anti-fascist Coordination of Athens and Piraeus (ACAP), PAME and anarchist groups. A challenge for future research would be to rethink, from a comparative perspective, all these experiences of struggle as a collective learning process with the aim of understanding their strong and weak points and their differences in 'strategic capacity'. This method would reveal hidden potentialities and open up future possibilities of organically linking their strongest points in a new synthesis, combining the main achievements of the Pakistani Community and KEERFA with ACAP's ability to unite forces, the anarchist readiness for direct action and PAME's organisational capacities.

[153] For the concept of the 'movement as a whole', see Barker (2016), available at: https://www.rs21.org.uk/2016/10/21/revolutionary-reflections-the-movement-as-a-whole-waves-and-crisis-of-the-social-movement/ (Accessed: 6 January 2021).

8.9 Summary

Through a chronology of resistances, this chapter explored how the Pakistani Community, KEERFA and the UIW brought together different moments of struggle against exploitation, Islamophobia and racist attacks. It highlighted how the Pakistani Community linked these different areas of struggle within a broader agenda connected to the anti-austerity movement. The chapter's findings on immigrant participation in the squares' movement and the example of the ties between POE-OTA and the immigrant workers demonstrated the ability of the Pakistani Community and the UIW to build class-oriented cross-ethnic solidarities.

This chapter attempted to develop a deeper understanding of the role of Golden Dawn, 'the closest we've yet come to seeing fascism in its most extreme form regain a foothold in European politics this century' (Trilling, 2020). Cautious to discern forms of authoritarian statism from fascism, research showed how the neo-colonial immigration patterns followed by the Greek Government created favourable terrain for Golden Dawn. Using examples of two notable protest events in July and August 2012 and the presidential election in the autumn of that year, research revealed the methods of the struggle alongside the difficulties and internal debates over alliances and agenda-setting, and raised awareness of the far-reaching consequences of misleading understandings of fascism.

Following that, the chapter explored the justice campaign after the murder of Luqman and the JailGoldenDawn initiative after the murder of Fyssas and related these to the Pakistani Community and KEERFA's sophisticated understanding of the dialectics between street politics and legal–administrative responses to the fascist threat. Finally, it examined the legacy of the justice campaign for Luqman and the legacy of the Golden Dawn trial and identified strategic moves on the part of the Pakistani Community and KEERFA and achievements of the social movement as a whole.

Chapter 9: 'Full Legalisation or Death'. From the Communities of Struggle in the Island of Crete to the Emblematic 2011 Hunger Strike

9.1 Introduction

> *The relation between necroresistance and bare life can only be settled by the meanings attributed to struggle by agents who take into their hands the power of and over death to contest the power of and over life.*
>
> (Bargu, 2016: 86)

Between 2009 and 2011, there were numerous cases of hunger strikes organised by groups of immigrants on the Aegean Islands and the Greek mainland in detention centres, working places and public spaces.[154] These hunger strikes should be seen as part of transnational immigrant protests in which, as Pellander and Horsti (2017: 6) suggest, 'those in powerless positions create a certain sovereignty: the power to do something within the often very limited opportunities that they have'. In her analysis of a series of hunger strikes staged by refugees from 2012 to 2014 in Germany, Pfeifer explains that this type of strike embodies a refusal that resists the technologies of biopolitical sovereignty and necropolitical violence in Europe (Pfeifer, 2018: 460). Highlighting the long tradition of the hunger strike as a form of resistance, Isin (2008: 18) refers to the hunger strike staged by the British suffragette Marion Wallace Dunlop in Holloway Prison in 1909, identifying it as a 'momentous act' and a catalyst for social transformation.

Within this framework, the aim of this chapter is to examine two hunger strikes by immigrant workers from Maghreb that were staged in 2008 and 2011, respectively. The first lasted 26 days, involved 15 immigrants and took place in the city of Chania on the island of Crete, one of the five biggest islands

[154] For more information, see Infomobile (2011), available at: http://infomobile.w2eu.net/files/2011/03/Press-Release-27th-November-2010.pdf (Accessed 28 December 2020).

in the Mediterranean. The second, which is the main focus of the chapter, was a large-scale, six-week hunger strike involving 300 immigrants who were living on Crete and travelled to Athens and Thessaloniki to carry out their protest.

To achieve the aims of this chapter, I conducted interviews with Liljana Saliaj and ML, and undertook background research on the communities of struggle on Crete during the 2000s.

9.2 Immigrants' Centres and the Antiracist Festival: The Conception, Implementation, and Diffusion of Two Powerful Ideas

The idea to open immigrant centres and organise annual Antiracist Festivals in Greece was conceived by members of Diktyo, a network for political and social rights founded in 1994 as part of the anti-capitalist, internationalist and democratic Left in Greece. One year later, Diktyo undertook a specific initiative to address the immigrant issues that proved strategic in the long term: founding the Network for the Social Support to Immigrants and Refugees (NSSIR) (Giannopoulos, 2019: 379-387). From its very beginning, the NSSIR worked closely with several immigrant communities to build organic ties that, in some cases, are still in place (e.g., Unity of Filipino Migrant Workers in Greece - KASAPI Hellas).[155] Subsequently, the NSSIR, these immigrant communities and other anti-racist organisations (e.g. Youth against Racism in Europe - YRE) founded the Coordination of Immigrants' and Antiracist Organisations, which organised the first Antiracist Festival in Athens in 1996. The event became an annual tradition and continues today.[156]

[155] For more information, see KASAPI Hellas (2015), available at: https://kasapihellas.wordpress.com/what-we-do/ (Accessed 14 December 2020).

[156] The annual Antiracist Festival is a meeting point for the broader anti-racist movement. Notably, in 2016, more than 200 organisations participated in the 19th Athens Antiracist Festival in Athens, which attracted 20,000 attendees (Antiracist Festival, 2016a; 2016b).

20. A drawing featuring the Immigrants' Center in Tsamadou Street in the neighbourhood of Exarchia (Steki Metanaston, 2015).

Building on the success of the first Antiracist Festival and on the long history of social centres in neighbouring Italy, the NSSIR opened the first immigrant centre in the Athens neighbourhood of Exarchia in the autumn of 1997. The idea was based on the assumption that a meeting and leisure point for the immigrant and anti-racist movement promotes co-existence in everyday collective activities and horizontal collaboration between immigrants and natives. This first immigrant centre in Athens became known as 'the Steki', which in Greek means a 'hangout'. During the 2000s, several organisations, as well as individual activists, took up these ideas by opening immigrant centres and organising Antiracist Festivals in different cities across Greece (Rethymno, Chania, Thessaloniki, Volos, Patras, etc.). While the term 'Steki' is used in all these cases, each 'Steki' has a unique history related to the local specificities, the level of immigrant participation and the political forces involved in its creation and everyday functioning.

Focusing on the Steki of Athens, it is important to note that shortly after its creation NSSIR took additional Steki-based initiatives with the aim to contribute to actual solidarity for immigrants. To cite some examples, NSSIR set up an Immigrant Info Point offering free information and support for immigrants. Further, in 1999, 'Piso Thrania' (The Back Row) was founded in the Steki of Athens, an initiative of teachers offering free Greek-language courses and that remains in place today. Politically, Diktyo has been very open in building alliances and has worked closely with SYRIZA in the past[157] and continues to cooperate with the extra-parliamentary Left and the anti-authoritarian scene on several campaigns. The managing assembly, which is responsible for the operation of Steki, is open to whoever wants to contribute. Throughout these years, Steki and its clubroom is open every evening and has become a cultural and political hub in Exarchia. During the last decade, members of Diktyo and the Steki had played a distinctive role in immigrant struggles, with characteristic examples being the hunger strike of 2011 and the solidarity movement for immigrants and refugees during and after 2015.

9.3 Through the Eyes of Liljana Saliaj: The Anti-racist Movement and the Steki of Rethymno during the 2000s

The idea of establishing a Steki in Rethymno, a city of more than 34,000 inhabitants on the island of Crete (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011: Table B09), was proposed by Greek activists in 2000. It was very well received by a large number of immigrants living and working in Rethymno, and they made it possible for the idea to take shape. As Trivila and Marvakis (2007) note in their relevant

[157] Post-2008, most Diktyo members were SYRIZA affiliates until the party split in 2015. Diktyo defended the result of the July 2015 referendum and clearly opposed the memorandum and austerity measures imposed by the SYRIZA-ANEL Government. The ties between Diktyo and the Synaspismos Youth have always been especially strong. The Synaspismos Youth was the youth organisation of Synaspismos, the largest party which formed SYRIZA in 2004. Most of its members also split from SYRIZA after July 2015.

research, the Steki of Rethymno is a single-family dwelling with a small yard in the back, which is leased by the participants. As they add:

> Immigrants, students, and other local participants put forth all of their mechanical and handcrafting knowhow in order for the physical environment to take shape. The constructing materials for this endeavor came from donations provided by local merchants and businesses. This cycling of resources demonstrates one of the founding principles of the center, as does the interdependence that is cultivated by such initiatives.
>
> (Trivila and Marvakis, 2007: 370)

The researchers describe the Steki of Rethymno as a 'real-experimental initiative' with the ongoing goal of 'collective socialization' and 'the development of mutuality' between the immigrants and the local population (Triliva and Marvakis, 2007: 370). Notably, in the first elections of the Steki of Rethymno, which had by then taken the form of an association, the seven-member board of directors included representatives from six different countries (Bulgaria, Syria, Albania, Armenia, India and Greece) (Konstantinova, 2002). Further, the activation of the immigrants encouraged the formation of more local collectivities, such as the Community of Syrian Immigrants and the Albanian Immigrant Forum of Rethymno (AIFR).

Before presenting the story of Liljana Saliaj, the AIFR spokesperson in the mid-2000s, it is necessary to provide some background information on the Albanian immigrants who represent by far the largest immigrant group in Greece. They arrived *en masse* in Greece during the first post-socialist period after March 1992 and were the first to experience the neo-colonial practices of the Greek state on such a huge scale. As Christopoulos (2014: 32) explains, Albanian immigrants entered Greece under conditions of total deprivation and lack of human dignity. From 1992 to 1995, 250–282,000 immigrants, predominantly Albanians, were annually deported from Greece (Baldwin-Edwards, 2014).

Apart from state repression, Albanian immigrants also faced a form of social panic that led to social exclusion known as *Albanophobia* (Karydis, 2016). Consequently, many of them developed personal

strategies, such as renouncing their ethnic origin in certain domains of their life —what scholars describe as 'submissive adaptation' and an extreme form of 'identity management'— to avoid social exclusion (Alvaro *et al*., 2008: 110).[158] The situation was even more complicated by the Greek policy of giving preferential treatment to ethnic Greek Albanian citizens (*Vorioipirotes* in Greek, from Northern Epirus), who were issued special identity cards and were eligible for specific welfare benefits. The number of these cardholders is estimated to have reached 100,000 by the end of the 1990s (Gropas and Triandafyllidou, 2005: 17).

I had the opportunity to discuss the above issues with Liljana Saliaj, who arrived in Rethymno from Albania in 1994; her older brothers had already immigrated to the city. Saliaj was raised in Përmet, a small city in the Vjosa River valley, approximately 30 kilometres from the Greek border. Her parents were poor farmers who worked in the local agricultural cooperative and had seven children. Before moving to Greece, Saliaj had a romantic view of Ancient Greece from schoolbooks, some favourite Greek comedy films from the 1970s and a good knowledge of the Greek anti-fascist resistance during World War II through books, songs, oral stories and popular movies from her childhood.[159] She was in her mid-twenties when she travelled to Greece with her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter:

> *I started working three days after my arrival in Rethymno. My first employer was the worst I ever had. And guess what? He called himself a 'communist'! I found it outrageous. I knew from my country that many called themselves 'communists' when their practice was in the opposite direction. But I also knew to distinguish who is who, because I was brought up in a family who were honest people, who remained faithful to the ideals of communism. This employer was not a communist, he was a savage exploiter.*

Since she was from Përmet, Saliaj could have taken advantage of the generally preferential treatment of *Vorioipirotes* in Greece. However, in spite of pressure from friends and relatives, she was determined to swim against the tide:

[158] The researchers analyse this identity power game, focusing on immigrant youngsters from Albania.
[159] She referred specifically to the Greek movie *The Man with the Carnation* (Tzimas, 1980) about the life, trial and execution of the Greek communist leader Nikos Beloyannis in 1952.

> *When I would introduce myself, I would say that I am Liljana and I come from Albania. I refused to change my name to Greek and renounce my identity. I wanted to be respected for what I am. This cost me some arrests but, in the long run, it helped me build an honest relationship with the local population.*

Saliaj was undocumented until 1997 and is a temporary resident permit holder since then. When she first heard about the idea of a Steki in Rethymno six years after arriving there, she was very excited. However, some people in her social circles were hostile to the idea of her participation; she described this as a *'great confrontation with the conservative view of some Albanians'*:

> *They told me that it was unacceptable to hang out with the Greek leftists and anarchists. And they added: 'You, as a woman, and even more as a single-mother, you should look after your house and your child. Why should you care about the Indian, Syrian and African immigrants?'*

By contrast, Saliaj's father, who died in Albania in 2004, was proud of his daughter's political involvement and deeply moved when he heard her stories about the activities of the Greek Left. For Saliaj, her participation in the Steki was non-negotiable—she was a feminist, as she described, and had not accepted such constraints on her behaviour from a very young age. Thus, not only did she become involved in the Steki, but started writing regular articles about migration issues for local newspapers and served for a period as president of the AIFR. She described her political participation as an empowering experience that, among other things, motivated her to fulfil her passion for education.

Indeed, in 2004, Saliaj started studying political science at the University of Crete. Remarkably, she also worked split shifts in the tourist sector for almost 12 hours a day during this period,[160] as well as looking after her daughter and spending her remaining time in the Steki, helping other immigrants address their everyday difficulties with the state bureaucracy, employers and more. For Saliaj, these mutual aid structures formed a culture of solidarity which she identified as the most valuable lesson

[160] Based on her personal experiences, during our interview, she detailed the harsh working conditions of immigrant women in restaurant companies and domestic and cleaning services.

from her activist experience during that period. At the same time, she did not idealise the Steki and elaborated on its contradictions, including fights between local SYRIZA members and autonomists, internal SYRIZA debates, patronising attitudes, disappointments and splits.[161] As she noted, the self-organisation of immigrants is far more difficult in practice than in theory. However, evaluating the overall experience, she said that she never regretted her participation and emphasised that such initiatives proved decisive in specific social and political moments.

The most characteristic example is the anti-racist response after the murder of Edison Jahai, a 17-year-old inhabitant of Rethymno of Albanian origin, on New Year's Eve 2006. A group of seven people invaded Jahai's house, and one stabbed him 17 times to take revenge for a previous dispute between Greek and Albanian youngsters in which Jahai was not involved. The AIFR's readiness to mobilise on a large scale was crucial to preventing a cover-up. Saliaj played a leading role in these mobilisations and explained how they successfully built a broad alliance,[162] challenged media representations and demand a thorough investigation. While she received threats from Golden Dawn and the local Organization of Nationalists Rethymno (OER), her sense of duty and desire for justice motivated her to fight even harder. This experience strengthened her deep conviction that immigrant political participation was the only solution to their problems and a crucial factor in the quality of a country's democracy.

[161] Saliaj also offered some critical insights into the Antiracist Festivals, noting that the cultural aspect of these events is often overemphasised at the expense of the political. While this criticism is, in my view, debatable, it is worthy of attention that the Cretan Forum of Immigrants (CFI) also took a critical view and did not participate in the 2009 Antiracist Festival in Chania (CFI, 2009c).

[162] A huge demonstration was organised a week after the crime, supported by 57 local associations and the vast majority of the local population (Ios tis Kiriakis, 2006).

9.4 'A Crack in the Fortress Europe Walls': The Case of Chania and the 2008 Hunger Strike of the 15 North African Workers

21. The beginning of the hunger strike at the entrance to the town's city hall in Chania, 11 November 2008. The banner read: 'Hunger strike. For dignity and the right to life' (clandestina, 2008).

Chania is a city with around 54,000 inhabitants, located along the north coast of the island of Crete, about 65 kilometres west of Rethymno. Twelve per cent of the city's total population are immigrants (slightly more than half of them women), and most of them work in the construction, touristic and agricultural sector (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011: Table B09). Chania became the site of major immigrant struggles in the second half of the 2000s, which, in tandem with the aforementioned activities of the anti-racist movement in Rethymno, constituted a long-term process of building infrastructures of dissent on Crete.

A milestone in this process was the opening of the Steki of Chania in 2005. A year later, immigrant workers from Maghreb founded the Maghreb Arabi Association (MAA). In 2007, Greeks activists, the MAA and other associations and individual immigrants set up a new collective in Chania, the Cretan

Forum of Immigrants (CFI). According to its declaration, the CFI is 'a collective based on direct action and practical solidarity' with the goal of contributing to 'the collective voicing of immigration related issues and the public representation of immigrants' (CFI, 2009b). In 2008, the CFI and MAA opened a second social centre near the Steki of Chania and undertook several initiatives, from putting pressure on municipal councils to issue birth certificates to the children of immigrants to organising solidarity football events and staging an impressive demonstration against Fortress Europe in the summer of 2008.

All these collective efforts culminated in the autumn of 2008, more specifically on 11 November 2008, when 15 members of the CFI and MAA (many of whom were also participants in the Steki of Chania) launched a hunger strike, putting forth specific demands for residence and work permits. In what follows, I focus on specific elements of that struggle, giving due consideration to the fact that during a hunger strike, 'every single moment is unique and exceptional' (CFI, 2009d).[163] First, the immigrants made it clear that going on a hunger strike was a collective decision following a lengthy deliberation (Karavani, 2008: 10). Subsequently, a broad solidarity initiative was formed with the aim of providing psychological and material support to the 15 hunger strikers, putting the maximum pressure on the government and spreading awareness of the struggle across many social layers. The hunger strike was initially staged at the entrance to the town's city hall, but was forced to relocate after pressure from the mayor and threats of police intervention.

A grand demonstration moved the camp to a new site, and the hunger strikers addressed the local population: 'We leave the town hall entrance with our heads held high. (…) Fighters never leave the battle. They only move to new positions, just like lions like to change their den' (Liviakis and Maridakis, 2008; clandestina, 2008a).

[163] For a short documentary about the 2008 hunger strike (without English subtitles) see Hajji, Zouridis and El Mastari (2008), available at: https://vimeo.com/19350119 (Accessed 14 December 2020).

22. A demonstration in the streets of the Chania city centre from the town's city hall to the new site of the hunger strike, 13 November 2008. The protesters lifted the tents up in their arms (Liviakis and Maridakis, 2008)

Taking advantage of a university building near the new hunger strike site, occupied at the time by the Technical University of Crete student union, the student Left organisations, especially the United Independent Left Movement (EAAK),[164] provided crucial political and organisational support. The support and solidarity initiatives of the anti-authoritarian squat Rosa Nera were also vital.[165] On 17 November 2008, the immigrant members of the solidarity initiative supporting the strike took the lead in the rally in Chania, honouring the 1973 student uprising alongside the Technical University of Crete

[164] The EAAK was, at the time, the strongest force in the student union in Chania. The EAAK regroups many anti-capitalist tendencies within Greek universities and has been one of the main forces in the university student movement since 1990–91.

[165] After 16 years of occupation, the Rosa Nera squat was evicted in the autumn of 2020 (Squat net, 2020).

student union and turning the day into a mass manifestation of solidarity with the hunger strikers (Solidarity Initiative to the 15, 2008a).[166]

In general, the local population's solidarity with the hunger strikers was an outstanding aspect of that struggle that, as the CFI argues, altered the perception many locals once had of immigrants 'without papers' (CFI, 2009d). Notably, by the ninth day of the hunger strike, more than 700 Chania inhabitants had visited the strikers and signed a statement of support, including representatives of parliamentary (SYRIZA,[167] KKE and PASOK) and extra-parliamentary political parties, the Regional Labour Center, the Bar Association and human rights NGOs (Solidarity Initiative to the 15, 2008b: comment 3; 2008c).

On the 26th day, with 10 of the 15 hunger strikers transferred to hospital, the hunger strike ended, with residence permits issued to all 15 strikers following a ministerial decision. It is of the utmost importance that hundreds of immigrant workers in Chania, Rethymno and all over Crete took the lead in the solidarity movement and became, as the Solidarity Initiative to the 15 (2008d) noted, the 'watchful guardians of the hunger strikers'. As the CFI (2009c) commented, with this victory, the movement 'managed a crack upon the Fortress, but haven't wrecked it yet…'

[166] The demonstration also sent a strong message of solidarity to the huge hunger strike staged during the same period in the country's prisons. The 15 immigrant hunger strikers issued a statement expressing their solidarity with the imprisoned hunger strikers, many of whom were also immigrants (CFI, 2008).

[167] The solidarity initiatives of SYRIZA MP Periklis Korovesis deserve a special mention. Korovesis (1941–2020) was a renowned author, resistance fighter against the Military Junta in Greece, former political prisoner and torture survivor. In November 2008, he travelled from Athens to Chania to express his support for the hunger strikers and brought the issue to the Greek Parliament (clandestina, 2008b, Hellenic Parliament, 2008). Korovesis resigned from SYRIZA after the July 2015 referendum.

9.5 Through the Eyes of ML: From the Eruption of Crisis to the 2011 Hunger Strike

Having set the scene, I now present the story of one of the 300 immigrant workers who launched the 2011 hunger strike. ML was born in Western Sahara in 1986 and his early political formation took place in the context of the ongoing struggle of Sahrawi people for independence, freedom and justice. He participated in his high school student movement, which resisted discrimination against the Sahrawi youth by the Moroccan Government and upheld the long anti-colonial tradition of the Sahrawi people.[168] ML arrived in Greece via Turkey at the end of 2007. He managed to cross the Aegean Sea in a small boat and reached Athens in January 2008 after a week in the Samos detention centre. He told me, *'I took a deep breath. I was so happy that I had made it so far, even if I saw all the difficulties ahead'*.

ML had a relative in Athens who offered him accommodation for a short period. Relatively soon, he managed to submit an asylum application and obtain a temporary residence card, which could be renewed every six months as long as he had an active asylum claim. Even though he was one of the lucky few, ML said he found it unacceptable that *'access to asylum had degenerated into a lottery, with thousands of people being treated like "trash"'* outside the gate of the Aliens and Migration Directorate of the Greek Police at Petrou Ralli Avenue.[169]

[168] ML particularly referred to El-Ouali Mustapha Sayed (1948–1976), known as Luali, the co-founder and second Secretary-General of the Polisario Front: *'Luali is an icon for our struggles. He is our own Che Guevara'*.

[169] In 2010 Greece was the European country with the highest number of asylum cases pending in limbo (Cabot, 2012). Given that, it is useful to recall the ECHR's judgment in the *MSS v. Belgium and Greece* case, in which the Court particularly noted the general deficiencies of the asylum procedure in Greece. ML's descriptions align with the findings of the Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees (GLRMR) after an *ad hoc* visit to Petrou Ralli in January 2009. GLRMR reported that the selection procedure was informal and chaotic and effectively deprived the vast majority of their right to submit an asylum claim (GLRMR, 2009). In addition, two stories of Pakistani immigrants who lost their lives near the gate of the Aliens Directorate in the autumn of 2008 and the winter of 2009 were presented earlier (see Chapter 5).

Later in 2008, ML decided to move to Chania, thinking that a smaller place than Athens would be an easier one in which to make a new beginning. There, he started employment as a construction worker and farmer and joined the MAA, CFI and Steki of Chania. Of the latter, he noted that he enjoyed interacting with Greek activists and engaging in discussions that opened his mind and influenced his political formation. He described the post-2008 period of crisis as full of stress about what would happen next. According to ML, the eruption of the crisis had both positive and negative effects regarding the possibilities of alliances between immigrant and native workers, and that these effects were more evident in a small society such as Chania.

On the negative side, his observations align with those of researchers about the 'sporadic but regular pattern of racist violence in the Greek borderlands of Crete, accompanied by a shifting of anti-immigrant hostility into the mainstream of social attitudes' (Law *et al.*, 2014: 158). ML particularly emphasised the appearance of fascist groups, which, during this period, started beating immigrants and Greek anti-racists in the streets of Chania.[170] On the positive side, he pointed out that a significant proportion of society engaged in common struggles with the immigrants. ML referred to general strike demonstrations and protests at work with the trade unions (e.g., on construction sites for unpaid wages), protests outside police stations against the detention of undocumented immigrant workers and several other activities with mass immigrant participation in Chania, such as the solidarity movement for Kuneva in the winter of 2009 and the pro-Palestinian anti-blockade initiatives ('the Ship to Gaza Campaign') in the spring of 2010 (CFI, 2010b).

The MAA had an elected board of directors, but as ML noted, the weekly assembly was the collective body making the crucial decisions. These assemblies were held in Arabic and were attended by an average of 50 members each week, mostly male. ML said that the majority of MAA members had very

[170] There are plenty of reports by the CFI and other organisations of the racist attacks during 2009–10 (e.g., CFI, 2009e; 2009f; clandestina, 2009a; 2009b). ML particularly noted the anti-racist demonstrations after the attack of a young female teacher by two men who carved swastika symbols on her arm because she had been giving free Greek lessons to immigrant children (CFI, 2010a).

limited political experience before arriving in Chania, while a few, including himself, had some affiliations with the leftist and communist movement in the Maghreb. In the assemblies, they mainly discussed the problems they faced in their daily lives and avoided the situation in North Africa —for example, the conflict between the Moroccans and the Sahrawi— as this could trigger divisions. The most burning topic was the issuing procedures for residence permits, since most MAA members were 'without papers', including those who had held a residence permit in the past but failed to renew it.

In light of the above, many immigrants proposed launching a mass hunger strike throughout 2010. The idea was mooted for several months. ML explained that initially, not everybody agreed with the proposal, but as the racist attacks and arrests of undocumented immigrants increased day after day, more and more concluded that a hunger strike was the most potentially impactful and victorious means of struggle. The 2008 hunger strike served as a source of inspiration and guidance. As ML commented: *'It was a victory for all the movement. (…) We learnt from that experience that they will never give us anything if we beg for it. We have to fight like hell for our rights'*.

The decision to go on hunger strike was thus the democratic outcome of a widespread public deliberation exercise, since consecutive assemblies were held in public squares of Chania with the participation of many hundreds of immigrant workers. It was also the outcome of the daily discussions, interactions, solidarity practices and networks of trust between thousands of immigrants living and working throughout Crete—what is described in the autonomist framework as 'imperceptible politics' (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos, 2008: 72). It is important to note that the immigrants had the first say in preparing for the hunger strike and made the most crucial decisions regarding the intended target, the spatial aspect, the timing, the number of participants and the allies.

First, instead of fighting for residence permits for themselves, the hunger strikers demanded the legalisation of all immigrant men, women and children living in Greece.[171] Second, they concluded that staging the hunger strike in the small city of Chania had a strategic disadvantage. Even if local support for the issue was huge in 2008, it largely remained a local Cretan issue and, therefore, the pressure it placed on Greece's central authorities in Athens was relatively weak.[172] As a result, the strikers decided to stage their protest in Athens and Thessaloniki, the capital and the second largest city in Greece, respectively. Third, the timing of the hunger strike was mostly determined by the harvest period. The end of January was considered most suitable, as many immigrants work on the olive harvest during autumn. Fourth, according to ML, more than 1,000 immigrant workers from all over Crete were willing to participate in the hunger strike. Ultimately, for practical reasons, the number of participants was restricted to 300.[173]

Finally, the hunger strikers understood very well that their success mostly depended on their capacity to spark a huge solidarity movement. The essential elements of the method they applied were similar to those of the 2008 hunger strike, even though the conjuncture, the scale of the struggle and the stakes were different. The immigrants asked Greek anti-racist organisations to work together and elected a committee to lay the necessary groundwork for the hunger strike. The hunger strikers formed their own assembly and joined forces with two solidarity initiatives formed in Athens[174] and Thessaloniki.

[171] As Mantanika and Kouki (2011: 483) argue, the hunger strike was unique in articulating a maximalist demand (some could say impractical or utopian) that challenged the inefficiency of the migration policies of the Greek state, opening up the agenda to issues that had not previously been debated often in public.

[172] Another related aspect had to do with what the CFI identified as the Athens-centred mentality and function of the movement as a whole (CFI, 2009d). The CFI undertook some initiatives to change this mentality, the most important of which was organising the first All-Greece Meeting for New Ideas and Action on the issues of Immigration in Chania in the spring of 2009 (CFI, 2009a).

[173] While it is known as the hunger strike of the '300', the actual number of the participants was 287 (Pistikos, 2016).

[174] Among the forces that made a significant contribution to the solidarity initiative in Athens, the following stood out: CFI, Diktyo, NSSIR, Synaspismos Youth, Kontra, Anti-Authoritarian Movement of Athens, 'Expel Racism' Movement and Xekinima. Two decision-making assemblies were formed, one of the hunger strikers and one of the solidarity initiative, and they coordinated their activities.

In January 2011, around 300 male immigrants arrived in Athens by ship, and 50 of them continued their journey to Thessaloniki in Northern Greece. Finding the most suitable spaces to host the hunger strike proved a difficult and delicate issue to handle. The solidarity initiatives occupied an empty building of the Athens School of Law and the seventh floor of the Thessaloniki Labour Center for the purposes of the struggle.

The biggest hunger strike of immigrant workers in Greek history would begin on 25 January 2011. As the hunger strikers declared:

> We do not have any other way to make our voices heard, to raise awareness of our rights. (…) We risk our lives because, either way, there is no dignity in our living conditions. We would rather die here than allow our children to suffer what we have been through.
>
> (Assembly of Migrant Hunger Strikers, 2011)

9.6 Reflections on the 2011 Hunger Strike Focusing on the Far-reaching Implications of the 'Athens School of Law' Debate

Examining the various aspects of the six-week-long hunger strike would far exceed the scope of this study. Once again, it goes without saying that every single moment during these 44 days and nights of struggle was unique and exceptional. A mass hunger strike conducted by undocumented immigrants in the midst of crisis was immediately considered an existential threat to the establishment, which was already being challenged by mass anti-austerity movements after the first Greek bailout. As a result, the immediate governmental[175] and media response was a well-orchestrated anti-immigrant campaign aptly described by the immigrant representative of the Thessaloniki hunger strikers as '44 days of psychological war' (clandestina, 2011c). The main axes of this 'divide and rule' strategy were isolating

[175] It is worth noting that in 2008, PASOK, at the time the largest opposition party, supported the hunger strike of the 15 in Chania. By contrast, during 2011, the PASOK government orchestrated the anti-immigrant campaign.

the hunger strikers and criminalising the solidarity movement.[176] In line with the neo-colonial immigration patterns of Fortress Europe, the hunger strikers were presented by the government and media as threat to national security. This accusation was often accompanied by conspiracy theories depicting the hunger strike as a plot of dark forces working against the country.

23. Hunger strikers and supporters in the courtyard outside the Megaron Ypatia, February 2011 (Welcome to Europe, 2011).

From the outset, this anti-immigrant campaign centred on demonising the hunger strikers and the solidarity initiative by presenting them as 'unlawful invaders' (*sic*) for using the Athens School of Law building as the site of the strike. Mantanika and Kouki (2011: 483) provide a view of the symbolisms and practicalities behind this choice, explaining that the space was deemed appropriate for fulfilling the need for public visibility and for protecting the strikers. First, the university premises enjoyed

[176] Attempts to criminalise the solidarity movement included, among other tactics, threats to press charges against members of the solidarity initiative for 'illegal transportation of people', and the arrest of two women who accompanied the hunger strikers to a hospital in Athens for objecting to trays of food being left next to the strikers' beds —the women said that such 'medical' practices constituted torture (*The Scotsman,* 2011; clandestina, 2011c).

'asylum' status, which prohibited the police from entering unless they were specifically invited by university authorities or a life-threatening crime was being committed. In addition, the building, which was not used for academic purposes at the time, is a historic site related to the anti-dictatorship uprising in 1973[177] and other major social struggles since then.[178] Further, the student organisation Left Unity (AREN)[179] actively participated in the solidarity initiative, and the majority of the School of Law student union members supported the hunger strikers (Giannopoulos, 2019: 638-639).[180]

However, for the mainstream media and pro-establishment parties, the occupation of a university building by clandestine foreigners was an unacceptable practice beyond the limits of tolerance. Therefore, the government handed the issue to the Greek police. Subsequently, a special police division surrounded the School of Law, blocked the doors and threatened to force the strikers out, deport the immigrants and press charges against the Greek activists in the solidarity movement. Ultimately, after lengthy negotiations and an overnight police siege (Zavos, 2011), 48 hours after the hunger strike began, the immigrants and their supporters decided to leave the School of Law for an alternative venue. An extraordinary demonstration took place in the middle of the night, with the hunger strikers moving to the new location (a privately-owned building known as 'Ypatia') chanting slogans and carrying clothes, sleeping bags, mattresses, banners and leaflets (Xekinima, 2011).

[177] The Athens School of Law occupation in February 1973 was the forerunner to the November 1973 Polytechnic uprising (Kornetis, 2013)

[178] Walsh and Tsilimpounidi (2012) argue that staging the hunger strike in the Athens School of Law evoked the ghosts of all previous struggles against the domination of the junta until the early 1970s, and of students' and radicals' struggles against the police since that time. It is also useful to recall that both the Athens School of Law and the Thessaloniki Labour Center were occupied and transformed into centres of struggle during the December 2008 uprising.

[179] AREN was formed after the student movement of 2006–07 and brought together several Left forces in Greek universities related to SYRIZA, the main one being the Youth Synaspismos. After the July 2015 referendum, AREN adopted a clear position against the SYRIZA-ANEL government. The students that remained SYRIZA affiliates resigned from AREN in the autumn of 2015 (AREN, 2015).

[180] The student wings of PASOK (PASP) and New Democracy (DAP) denounced the occupation and criticised AREN for its active participation in occupying the empty School of Law building (Pistikos, 2016: 113).

The prevailing media representations of the immigrants, as Golfinopoulos (2017: 93) points out, stemmed from and contributed to a nationalist project that aimed to secure the established social and national hierarchy and deny the authority of migrants as political agents. Along these lines, I claim that the hunger strike, a non-violent form of resistance *par excellence*, was so threatening for the establishment because it challenged what Ciccariello-Maher (2010: 5-6) describes as 'the symbolic ontological violence of racialization'. That is, the walls of exclusion that divide being from non-being—in this case, dividing Greek citizens from 'illegal' (*sic*) immigrants. In other words, the most dangerous element of the struggle was the mass public appearance of the hunger strikers as a collective force in downtown Athens and the subsequent emergence of a collective democratic body that transformed the Athens School of Law into a centre of struggle.

In that respect, my interviews with Saliaj and ML offered a penetrating look at the role of the solidarity movement and the 'Athens School of Law' debate over whether it was appropriate for the strikers to use the School of Law as the location of the strike. Saliaj was living in Athens in 2010, participated in the solidarity initiative and significantly contributed to laying the necessary groundwork for the hunger strike.[181] Although she had her doubts about this form of struggle because of its serious health consequences, including the risk of death, after the 300 immigrants informed the solidarity initiative of their decision to launch the strike, it was clear to Saliaj that the duty of the movement was to come out in force to support them.

With a view to influence, as much as possible, public attitudes and political practice, Saliaj (2011) intervened in the public debate in the second week of the strike with a widely published article in the daily *Eleftherotypia* under the headline: 'I am one of the "instigators"!' In this article, she defended the immigrants' voices and acts of resistance. She noted that she did not belong to any political party

[181] It is important to note that she also participated in the solidarity movement for the 15 hunger strikers in Chania and was among the members of the solidarity initiative who met with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Internal Affairs as part of the negotiations with the government in 2008.

and emphasised that she found the fact that the immigrants were presented in the public sphere as weak-willed and 'manipulated' by the Greek 'instigators' especially insulting. She argued that if a crucial element of the university asylum concept was to protect the student movement and, more generally, the mass struggles of the 'people' from state repression, then the hostility shown towards the immigrant hunger strikers raised the theoretical and political question of whether the 'people' included those immigrants.

The stakes were high, especially considering that at the start of the strike, the Greek Left was split as to the appropriateness and timeliness of the protest (Zavos, 2011), particularly the decision to occupy a university building.[182] Saliaj's insightful comments should be read and understood in tandem with the feeling ML described when the strikers first arrived at the Athens School of Law: *'Hunger striking for our rights in the place where human rights are taught, that was the greatest gift they could give us for the beginning of our struggle!'*

9.7 Distinctive Features of the Solidarity Movement and the Legacy of the 2011 Hunger Strike

Manolis Glezos (1922-2020), an anti-fascist resistance fighter in WWII and a hunger striker in 1952,[183] has publicly challenged the mainstream media's representations of the hunger strikers, highlighted the stakes of the struggle and the duty of solidarity:

[182] Polemical articles against prominent Greek members of the solidarity initiative appeared in the daily *Rizospastis*, and KKE argued that the occupation of the Athens School of Law for the purposes of the hunger strike was detrimental for the popular movement (*Rizospastis*, 2011a: 7). While KKE supported the hunger strikers, still it presented the immigrants as 'manipulated' by the Greek members of the solidarity initiative. In the case of SYRIZA, there was a tense internal debate (Pistikos, 2016: 148-149). On the one hand, the Synaspismos Youth and other SYRIZA members played a crucial role in the solidarity movement. Conversely, the SYRIZA leadership disassociated itself from the occupation. Worse, the representative of the Communist Organisation of Greece (KOE), which was participating in SYRIZA at the time, argued that the Athens School of Law occupation was disorienting the popular anti-memorandum movement (Rinaldi, 2011).

[183] In the 1951 parliamentary elections the United Democratic Left (EDA) decided to put forward candidates who were political prisoners and elected 10 MPs, including Manolis Glezos. All of them were either serving prison sentences or were detained 'for reasons of national security' in the exile

> Some think that this is a game and that these people are playing with their lives. They are not playing with their lives. These people are offering their lives in the name of the right to life.
>
> (Glezos, 2011)

Glezos' solidarity to the 300 immigrant hunger strikers is also symbolic of the connection between the emblematic struggle of the immigrant workers in the 21st century and the role of hunger strike in the traditions of popular resistance against state authoritarianism in Greece during the 20th century.

24. Sketch published in the daily *Rizospastis* in the New Year's Day in 1936 in solidarity with the hunger strike of one hundred thirty political exiles in the Aegean island of Ai Stratis, most of them members and cadres of KKE (Varnalis, 2014).

camps on isolated islands in the Greek archipelago (Panourgiá, 2009). Upon his election, Glezos started a hunger strike demanding the release of EDA MPs. He ended his hunger strike after 12 days upon the release of 7 MPs from their exile. Glezos was released from prison in the summer of 1954.

From a global perspective, the international character of the solidarity movement stood out for its worldwide acts of solidarity.[184] In his solidarity message to the hunger strikers, Balibar placed special emphasis on this aspect:

> The solidarity with the migrants must take form not only at a local scale, but at the continental level. This is especially important in a moment when, drawing on the effects of the capitalist crisis and the neo-liberal "solutions" which aggravate its social effects, aggressive nationalism is raising again its Medusa head in Europe, East and West, North and South.
>
> (Balibar, 2011)

Turning attention to Greece, Walsh and Tsilimpounidi (2012) point out that the strength of the immigrant hunger strikers came from their ability to capture the hearts and minds of Greek society. Speaking specifically about Athens, ML commented on the impact of the support they received:

> *The students were staying all night with us for safety reasons. They were reading books, discussing with us. It was something awesome, I tell you! Everyday labour unions, movements, solidarity kitchens and so many people visited us. Even when we were transferred to the hospitals, we were never alone. I don't know if we could continue for more than 20 days without them.*[185]

Focusing on immigrant participation in the solidarity movement, Saliaj expressed her disappointment at the fact that the majority of immigrants remained passive and elaborated on the shortcomings of several immigrant associations. She described her efforts to mobilise the Albanian immigrants and the Federation of Albanian Communities in Greece (FACG). It is indicative that Saliaj resigned from FACG because its leadership ignored her calls to actively engage with the solidarity movement for the 300. Further, she offered a critical assessment of the deeply flawed position of several immigrant

[184] For example, the Guatemalan immigrants in Barcelona (clandestina, 2011b), the Bulgarian anti-racists in Sofia, the Greek students and workers in Berlin (contra info, 2011), Paris and Brussels (Keep Talking Greece, 2011), the *sans-papiers* in Saints Denis (Sans-Papiers, 2011) and the feminists of Chiapas (clandestina, 2011a).

[185] Indicative of the holistic support given to the hunger strikers is the solidarity grassroots groups of lawyers and healthcare workers.

associations that choose to represent only legal immigrants and related it to their problematic role during the hunger strike.[186]

As Pistikos (2016: 246) argues in his dissertation, the 300 hunger strikers and solidarity movement did not manage to mobilise the broader layers of the immigrant population in Greece beyond some politicised sections. Worse, during the first days of the strike, the Minister of Citizen Protection appeared in the media together with some immigrant representatives in an attempt to isolate the strikers. Adopting a policy of 'divide and rule', the government and the mainstream media praised these representatives as the 'good', obedient immigrants in contrast with the 'evil', disobedient hunger strikers (Pistikos, 2016: 246).

At the same time, ML noted that there was a relatively broad immigrant minority that actively supported them. More precisely, ML placed emphasis on the support they received by the participants in the 2008 hunger strike in Chania.[187] Further, it is important to note that in the beginning of 2011, other groups of immigrants had already started a hunger strike demanding political asylum. Since November 2010, dozens of Afghan asylum seekers protested in a makeshift tent in front of Athens University (Propylaia) near the Athens School of Law (Sunday Migrants School, 2011). Their asylum cases were pending for several years. Many of these Afghan protesters started a hunger strike at the end of December 2010, during which nine of them sewn their mouths shut. Some other protesters from Iran and Palestine also staged a hunger strike in the Athens Polytechnic during January 2011 (Ibid). In this context, the hunger strike of the 300 was the culmination of a long chain of protests in which immigrants used their body as a form of resistance before and after 2011.

[186] In her master's thesis on Albanian immigrants' political participation in Greece, Saliaj (2015: 16) elaborates on these issues and offers critical comments on FACG.
[187] It is indicative that some of the 15 hunger strikers were living in other European countries in 2011 and travelled to Greece to support the 300 hunger strikers.

The chapter proceeds with some reflections on the legacy of the 300 hunger strikers. On the 44th day of the strike, when 120 hunger strikers had been transferred to hospital, a deal was reached with the government. Instead of full regularisation, the protesters were offered a biannually renewable status of 'indefinite tolerance', permission to visit their countries of origin and a promise of work permits (Skleparis, 2016). As the solidarity initiative declared:

> Today's government's decision to meet part of the demands of the 300 migrants on hunger strike proves that the only lost struggle is the one that is not led. It also showed to all the working people that the government of the EU, IMF and European Bank Memorandum is not invincible. The rigid militant spirit and broad social solidarity can bring tangible results. It is obvious that it will take a long and hard struggle for lifting the Apartheid against foreign workers living in Greece and Europe. However, there should be no doubt that the dedication of the 300 opened a new path of hope.
>
> (Solidarity Initiative to the 300, 2011)

Despite the initial victorious atmosphere, the end of the hunger strike found the hunger strikers and the different forces of the solidarity initiative split as to the strike's outcome and legacy. The debates were furious and were mostly about the negotiation process —what King (2016: 75) describes in her discussion of the 2011 hunger strike as 'being "in and against" the state'. Leaving the details of the negotiation process out of my study, I argue that the legacy of the hunger strike lies beyond its practical outcome. That is, despite the government's broken promises and strike's almost non-existent impact on the Greek state's immigration policy, its main achievement was inflicting a crack in Greece's wall of exclusion and sparking a dynamic process of cross-fertilising ideas and solidarity practices between immigrant hunger strikers and native anti-racists.

With ML, I had the opportunity to discuss a particular highlight in the wake of the 2011 hunger strike that attests to this argument. After the strike, ML started working in Athens and joined the Movement to Deport Racism (KAR). Among the many collective activities in which he participated, I distinguish the squares' movement in May–July 2011. ML was present in a daily basis and remained there until the last tent was removed from Syntagma Square. Adding to my examination of this movement

(Chapter 8), ML explained that while he *'felt like home in the "lower square" and popular assembly'*, he was irritated by *'the right-wingers with the Greek flags in the "upper square"'*.

ML confirmed that many of the former hunger strikers actively participated in the squares' movement, as did the Greek anti-racist organisations that were active in the solidarity movement for the 300. Further, he drew an interesting parallel between the 2011 squares' movement and the 2010 Gdeim Izik camp, known as the third Sahrawi Intifada, when 15,000–20,000 created a tent city in the desert on the outskirts of El Aaiún (Allan, 2016). While the 2010 uprising in Western Sahara is hardly known internationally, it is noteworthy that Noam Chomsky (2011) identified it as the beginning of the Arab Spring. ML followed the events through social media and his personal contacts with Sahrawi activists who actively participated in the Gdeim Izik camp. As ML noted, *'despite the differences, the demands were the same as in the squares' movement in Greece: bread, education and freedom. The motto was to live with dignity'.*

Two additional examples illustrate the aforementioned dynamic process of cross-fertilisation. First, in the autumn of 2011, the medical team that monitored and supported the hunger strikers in Thessaloniki decided to establish a social clinic-pharmacy of solidarity, providing free healthcare services to non-insured and socially excluded Greek citizens and immigrants alike. As they declared:

> As participants of the health services that were present together in the health surveillance and support of the 50 immigrants on hunger strike in the Thessaloniki Labour Center, as people in solidarity to their fight for full and equal rights with the local employees, we experienced the value and efficiency of solidarity in a such crucial sector of the everyday life, the medical treatment and health care.
>
> (Social Clinic of Solidarity, 2011)

Second, in January 2012, a year after the hunger strike, a group of CFI members, including some of the 300 hunger strikers, travelled again from Crete to Athens to meet with steelworkers and express solidarity for their heroic strike, which started in November 2011 and lasted until July 2012 —the longest workers' strike during the Greek crisis (CFI, 2012).

25. The president of the PAME-affiliated steelworkers' union together with CFI members at the gates of the factory in Aspropyrgos, 29 January 2012 (CFI, 2012).

Finally, ML shared a personal story that sheds even more light on the legacy of the hunger strike. I should note here that ML was one of the few immigrants who participated in the hunger strike, although he had been an asylum seeker since 2008 and had a renewable temporary residence card. The story goes as follows. Following the deal made with the government at the end of the strike, ML was given the renewable status of 'indefinite tolerance'. Subsequently, when he visited the Aliens and Migration Directorate of the Greek Police to renew his asylum seeker card some months later, they informed him that he had to choose between asylum seeker status and that of 'indefinite tolerance'.

The stakes were high considering that choosing 'indefinite tolerance', ML had to withdraw his asylum claim. Even though, ML was disappointed by the negotiation process and the deal with the government at the end of the strike, without a second thought he chose 'indefinite tolerance' for the only reason

that this status was the by-product of the strikers' collective struggle. I suggest that, in this specific context, ML's decision to withdraw his asylum claim constitutes an act of citizenship.

During 2013, the Greek state refused to renew the temporary residence permits of the former hunger strikers, marking the end of the 'indefinite tolerance' (left.gr, 2013). However, despite everything and even when he found himself 'without papers' five years after his arrival in Greece, ML never regretted his decisions. The following excerpt best illustrates his view on the legacy of the 2011 hunger strike:

> *If I could live my life again, I would have done the same things. And, if necessary, I am ready to go on a hunger strike again. For us, the former hunger strikers, life has always been a constant struggle. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. The important thing is not to lose the trust of your comrades in arms.*

9.8 Summary

This chapter has examined the six-week-long hunger strike conducted by 300 immigrant workers from Maghreb in 2011. While the hunger strike was staged in Athens and Thessaloniki, the strikers were living and working on the island of Crete. Thus, the chapter also turned attention to Rethymno and Chania, investigating the emergence of social and political networks along the southern border of the Aegean Sea. The findings revealed that immigrants and native anti-racists were building infrastructures of dissent in these two urban centres of Crete throughout the 2000s.

These included immigrants' centres, newly founded immigrant associations (e.g., AIFR, MAA) and multi-ethnic collectives (e.g., CFI) that became the collective voice of the immigrant workers and a 'school' of solidarity and struggle. Without underestimating the contradictions, splits and disappointments in the relationships between immigrant and native activists or the internal divisions and conservative attitudes within immigrant communities, the chapter presented a series of common activities, struggles and achievements, and specifically explored the victorious 2008 hunger strike of 15 immigrants in Chania. The findings revealed that the victory of these 15 hunger strikers, who were

granted residence permits after 26 days of struggle, was a source of inspiration for the 300 North Africans who decided to launch the 2011 hunger strike.

To shed more light on the latter's decision to strike, the chapter explored the impact of the post-2008 crisis on the situation of immigrants in Chania and provided evidence of the rise of racism on the one hand and new opportunities for inclusive alliances on the other. It then provided a view of the decision-making processes behind the strike, identifying crucial elements of this in relation to the strike's demands, timing, number of participants, allies and preparation. The chapter situated governmental and media responses to the strike within the broader context of the crisis in Greece after the first 2010 bailout, characterising these responses as part of a well-orchestrated anti-immigrant campaign that attempted to isolate the hunger strikers, deprive them of their political subjectivity and criminalise the solidarity movement.

Focusing on the debate around the appropriateness of the 2011 strikers using the Athens School of Law as the site of the protest, the research findings highlighted the far-reaching implications of this in terms of immigrant agency, civic freedoms and the conception of the 'people'. Finally, the chapter identified some of the strong and weak points of the solidarity movement, addressing immigrant participation and the legacy of the hunger strike in particular.

Chapter 10: PAME and the Immigrant Workers' Struggles: Highlights and Commentary

10.1 Introduction

The KKE and PAME have both appeared several times in previous chapters. PAME was founded on 3 April 1999 at the initiative of KKE trade unionists.[188] The participants included 230 trade unions, 18 national federations and regional trade union centres and 2,500 elected union representatives. These forces made the agreement to struggle together 'against the Capital, against the European Union, against imperialism and its wars'.[189] Since 2000, PAME has been a member of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).[190] This chapter focuses on the relationship between PAME and immigrant workers. According to its initial declaration, PAME (2010) pursues common struggles between immigrants and Greek workers and is based on the proletarian internationalism and solidarity principles.

In this chapter, I examine how the trade unions of PAME 'translated' the above principles into the daily political practice of their members. In other words, the main question here is how the PAME trade unions, with these organisational capacities, approached, interacted with, organised and supported immigrant workers. To achieve this aim, I combine my research into the KKE's official daily newspaper, *Rizospastis* ('The Radical')[191] with three interviews; the main findings offer a wide perspective on the scope of the class-oriented trade unions and the range of their activities.

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[188] For further reading, see PAME (2010), available at: https://pamehellas.gr/what-is-pame (Accessed: 1 December 2020).
[189] In the summer of 2012, PAME rallied eight sectoral federations, 13 labour centres and hundreds of first-level and sectoral unions with 850,000 members (KKE, 2012).
[190] In 2013, the WTFU represented 86 million workers from 120 countries across five continents (WTFU, 2013a).
[191] *Rizospastis* is the official newspaper of the KKE and first entered circulation in 1916. It is one of the oldest newspapers currently in circulation in Greece.

10.2 Immigrants Workers, PAME Trade Unions and the Coordinating Committee in the Early 2000s

26. Protest in Athens organised by the Coordinating Committee of immigrant associations and supported by the trade unions of PAME with the participation of thousands of immigrants, 17 July 2003 (*Rizospastis*, 2003: 11).

I conducted the first interview with Seyit Aldoğan, whom I met in the summer of 2019. Aldoğan and his family own a Kurdish restaurant in the neighbourhood of Exarchia since 2017. It was in this restaurant that we met twice for the purposes of this research during Aldoğan's morning breaks from his work. The walls of the restaurant were covered with Nâzim Hikmet's poetry and images of protests.

I begin Aldoğan's story in the early 2000s, when he worked as a builder and actively participated in the regional branch of the Construction Workers Trade Union of Athens (CWTUA) in Kallithea. Founded in 1984, the CWTUA is a founding member of PAME and was one of the most active trade unions in the early 2000s. In the 1999 CWTUA elections, from a total of 18,500 members who voted,

3,000 were immigrants. At the start of the 21st century, 5,000 immigrant construction workers in Athens were CWTUA members (Theodorou and Filliousis, 2000: 17).

I discussed this remarkable achievement with Aldoğan. First, he distinguished some of the CWTUA practices that contributed to its building of ties with the immigrant workers. First, he noted the workplace visits which occurred regularly in order to monitor health and safety conditions, inform the workers about their rights and protest in cases of unpaid wages and other violations of labour law. Aldoğan participated in many visits to construction sites alongside union delegates during the early 2000's. He concluded that the immigrant workers embraced the trade unionists and were very willing to hear from them. Second, the CWTUA created committees of immigrants within the union to specifically contribute to immigrant organising. In fact, Aldoğan participated in the committee of immigrants in the Kallithea regional branch of the CWTUA and worked closely with the union delegates on immigrant issues. He explained that this was a broader effort of the PAME trade unions, especially in sectors with huge numbers of immigrant workers.

At the same time, Aldoğan had no illusions about the difficulties related to the relationship between immigrant workers and their Greek counterparts. He explained that despite the union's efforts, in their everyday realities, immigrant workers were often isolated from the Greek workers. At this point, he gave me advice for future research:

> *You should rather find many immigrant construction workers and ask them the following two simple questions: 'You are working eight hours together with the Greek workers. How many times have you been invited to join them to eat together? How many times have you spent time together outside the workplace?' Sociologically the findings of this research would be very interesting. (…) You see, from there it starts, from eating together a bean soup. If you can't achieve this, then it means that integration is zero.*

Aldoğan also emphasised that in the lead-up to the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, working and living conditions in the construction sector had become unbearable for all workers, but especially immigrant workers. This was a serious challenge for the CWTUA that proved difficult to address. As a result of

these working conditions, 13 native and immigrant workers lost their lives and hundreds more were injured during construction projects for the Olympic Games (*Rizospastis*, 2004a: n.p.).

Aldoğan's role in PAME was not restricted to his activities in the CWTUA —he was also a very active participant in the Secretariat of the Immigrants of PAME (SIP). The SIP contributed to the general work of PAME, 'translating' PAME's broader activities into specific initiatives addressing immigrant workers. These 'translations' included organising central SIP events that brought together immigrant workers from different sectors and called on them to join their unions and take part in the daily struggle (*Rizospastis*, 2005c: 18). Further, the SIP contributed to preparing strikes in certain sectors and tried to persuade immigrant workers to engage in strike action (*Rizospastis*, 2005b: 16). Last but not least, the SIP engaged in cultural activities organised by trade unions or parents' associations for immigrant workers and their children, such as musical concerts and feasts (*Rizospastis*, 2005a: 29).

Alongside his duties in the CWTUA and the SIP, Aldoğan took part in the Coordinating Committee of Immigrant Associations (CC). The CC was created in Athens in October 2000 at the initiative of around 10 immigrant associations. From 2000–04, the CC rallied around 25 immigrant associations in Athens and other Greek cities. It was a multiethnic representative body that aspired to fight for immigrants' most immediate needs and encourage them to participate in immigrant associations and trade unions in their respective sectors. Aldoğan often joined the delegations that visited the authorities and raised specific demands on behalf of the CC (*Rizospastis*, 2003b: 25). In July 2003, the CC organised an outstanding in terms of size protest, when 4–5,000 protesters, mostly from Albania, marched from Omonoia to Sytnagma Square demanding 'legalisation for all the immigrants' (*Rizospastis*, 2003a: 11).

Further, the CC and the SIP often joined forces with the Democratic Rally for Freedom and Solidarity in order to denounce racist crimes and police violence. A characteristic example is the protest they organised outside the police station in the Agios Panteleimon neighbourhood after the police's ill-

treatment of refugees from Afghanistan (*Rizospastis*, 2004b: 3). The KKE supported these activities, and KKE MPs often brought these issues into the Greek Parliament. In addition, at the initiative of the Attica Party Organisation, since 2001, the KKE organises an annual festival 'for Greek and immigrant workers' in Fix Park in Patissia (*Rizospastis*, 2018: 12; KKE, 2020).

Having discussed Aldoğan's contribution to PAME (the CWTUA and the SIP) and the CC during the first half of the 2000s, I now summarise his life before he joined PAME.

10.3 'Revolutionaries around the Clock': The Story of Seyit Aldoğan from Diyarbakir to Greece

Seyit Aldoğan was born in 1960 in Diyarbakir, Turkey. His childhood experiences were marked by extreme poverty and the discrimination Kurds generally faced —and still face— from the Turkish state. Over the course of his school years, he worked a total of 10 different jobs to support his family. He joined the revolutionary Left as a teenager, contributed to his high school student movement and was a founding member of a youth club in Diyarbakir. He first heard about social inequalities, US imperialism and capitalist exploitation from his older brother, who was at the time a university student and a member of the revolutionary Left. He added that national liberation movements across the world, especially the Vietnamese people's resistance war against America, pushed his generation to choose sides and become part of this history. His first political experiences coincided with a period of harsh state repression. He specifically referred to the Turkish state's execution of three student leaders in 1972 and the impact it had on him.[192] As he described:

[192] Sweeney (2020) provides the historical context: 'The trio were part of Turkey's so-called "'68 generation" and seen as part of the wave of radical politics that was sweeping the world at the time. They were arrested in March 1971 following the kidnap of four US soldiers who were stationed in Ankara. A court charged them with attempting to "overthrow the constitutional order" and recommended the death sentence, which at that time needed to be approved by parliament. Despite a successful appeal to the Constitutional Court, parliament sat again and reaffirmed the death sentence. They were hanged on May 6 1972'.

> *The last words of Deniz Gezmiz: 'Long live Marxism-Leninism! Long live the brotherhood between the Kurdish and Turkish people! Long live the workers and peasants!' This was a seed growing inside me. Although I was only a small kid, I was already a worker in the production. Somebody has said that due to poverty kids mature faster.*

The state repression escalated further after martial law was imposed by the Turkish state in provinces.[193] Rights and freedoms were suspended and left-wing organisations and political newspapers were banned. Aldoğan described his life as an 18-year-old militant living underground while participating in the organised popular resistance, stating, *'We were revolutionaries around the clock'*. He was arrested by Turkish police officers and soldiers in the spring of 1980, and was thus already in prison before the military coup led by General Evren took place. As he described:

> *We never bowed our head to the dictator. We often went on hunger strike as part of our resistance. When I was released from prison I weighted no more than 48 kilos. (…) Prison was a school that trained me to analyse everything carefully and rethink my decisions one hundred times. I was in solitary confinement for six months, I could not move but I never stopped thinking. As a political prisoner, you learn how to fight egoism, how important is the solidarity between the comrades. (…) Many of our comrades were tortured to death and confronted death heroically.*

In 1986, at the age of 26 and after six years in prison, Aldoğan fled to Greece, arrived in Athens and was later granted refugee status. The Greek Left and the history of the movement in Greece was already familiar to him. As he explained, Greece was always part of the discussions between Turkish and Kurdish Left organisations:

> *The anti-fascist resistance in Greece and in all the Balkans during WWII played a role with a global significance. Nâzim Hikmet's poem is a very simple example of our thoughts and feelings: 'Every morning at sunrise my heart is shot in Greece.' Half our heart was in Greece.*

Discussing the mass arrival of immigrants from Albania and other Eastern countries during the 1990s, Aldoğan offered some insightful comments:

[193] When the military seized power on 12 September 1980, martial law was imposed in all of the existing 67 provinces of Turkey.

> *The previous decades, Greece was mostly a country sending rather than receiving immigrants. When immigration to Greece became a mass phenomenon, the immigrant question was handed over to the police. The Greek capital benefited enormously from the policy vacuum.*

In light of this new situation, a few politically active immigrants and refugees started developing ideas for the struggle. Aldoğan built on the experiences of the Turkish and Kurdish communities in other European countries and a long tradition of the labour movement in Turkey. He specifically referred to the Federation of Democratic Workers' Associations (DIDF), which was founded in Germany in 1980 by the union of several Turkish origin workers' associations. Further, Aldoğan was a correspondent for the Turkish newspaper *Evrensel* in Athens. As the main slogan of this working class press declares, 'The labour is universal'.[194]

In this context, the main assumption behind Aldoğan's ideas is the strategic importance of workplace organising. As he stated: *'Organising at work is the power of immigrant and Greek workers alike. We should never ignore this truth'.*

I now turn attention to the relationship between PAME and the Bangladeshi Immigrant Workers' Union of Greece (BIWUG).

10.4 The Organic Ties between PAME and the BIWUG and the Implications of Union-based, Class-oriented Labour Rights Lawyering

The BIWUG officially started operating in Athens in the summer of 2001. According to Elias Ahmed, the BIWUG spokesperson, at the start of the 21st century, the number of Bangladeshi workers in

[194] For further information on the past and present of *Evrensel*, see *Evrensel* (2017), available at: https://www.evrensel.net/daily/320907/story-of-the-evrensel-newspaper-since-1995 (Accessed: 1 December 2020) and *Evrensel* (2019), available at: https://www.evrensel.net/daily/392800/evrensel-newspaper-turns-25-labour-writes-history-and-evrensel-writes-about-labour (Accessed: 1 December 2020).

Greece was around 9,000 and most of them undocumented (*Rizospastis*, 2001: 31).[195] During the 2000s, the BIWUG had around 600 members —varying legal status— and a broad network of contacts with Bangladeshis within Greece (Fouskas, 2012: 66-68). From the very beginning, it worked closely with the KKE and the trade unions of PAME and was one of the most active members of the CC.

Focusing more on the post-2008 period,[196] it appears that the ties between KKE and BIWUG are very strong. Indicative of the KKE's organisational support is the fact that the office the BIWUG used as its headquarters was provided by the KKE (Fouskas, 2010: 601). The ties between BIWUG and PAME are equally strong.

27. Protest in Athens organised by BIWUG and supported by the trade unions of PAME with the participation of hundreds of Bangladeshi workers, March 2009 (*Rizospastis*, 2009: 20).

[195] In contrast, according to the 2001 census and the number of registered Bangladeshi immigrants was more than 4,800 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2001: Table M47). Immigration from Bangladesh to Greece is almost all male (98%).

[196] It is noteworthy that a BIWUG spokesperson took initiatives against racist attacks during December 2008 and was quoted in *Rizospastis* denouncing groups of extreme nationalists, which were attacking immigrant workers returning home from night work or standing outside immigrant social centres (*Rizospastis*, 2008i: 23).

In March 2009, the BIWUG organised a rally with the support of PAME using the slogan 'Workers of the world, unite!' in Bangla and Greek. Hundreds of Bangladeshi immigrants marched from Omonoia Square to the Ministry of Interior demanding political asylum for refugees, legalisation for all immigrants and the halt of police torture (*Rizospastis*, 2009a: 20).

In April 2009, before the 1 May demonstrations, the BIWUG organised a special event calling immigrant workers to participate in PAME's rally *(Rizospastis*, 2009b: 12). A few days after International Workers' Day, the BIWUG and PAME trade unionists protested outside the municipality of Athens and the Acropolis neighbourhood Police Station against police intimidation of Bangladeshi street vendors inside their own houses (*Rizospastis*, 2009c: 25).

Turning to PAME-affiliated unions, the Trade Union of Textile-Clothing and Leather Workers of Attica (TUTCLWA) continues to stand out for its well-coordinated efforts to organise Bangladeshi workers. As Fouskas explains in his research, most Bangladeshi tailors in Athens work on a piece rate for informally operating garment companies and manufacturers, and have no social insurance or social security stamps (Fouskas, 2012: 62). Over the last two decades, the TUTCLWA has systematically revealed the slave-like working conditions in what it describes as contemporary 'sweatshops' (*Rizospastis*, 2011b: 12).[197]

Indicative of mass immigrant participation in the union is the fact that of the 1,702 total votes cast in the 2007 TUTCLWA elections, 801 were from immigrant workers, the vast majority of whom were Bangladeshi (Fouskas, 2012: 72). In 2009, the TUTCLWA created a committee of immigrants —later resulting in an immigrant worker being elected to the board of directors— and organised public events that brought together Greek women and Bangladeshi men, enabling them to share their everyday

[197] For further analysis on the return of sweatshops in the apparel industry, Bonacich and Appelbaum (2000) investigate the phenomenon especially in Los Angeles at the end of the 20th century and combine their analysis with a description of the growing antisweatshop movement. Interestingly, the researchers argue that garment workers can be seen as the urban equivalent of farmworkers (Ibid: 314).

realities and experiences of struggle in this sector. Union delegates in coordination with PAME-affiliated immigrant tailors have developed a specific repertoire of actions, including protests, work stoppages, unannounced inspections and lawsuits. In certain cases, the immigrant tailors triumphed over the employers and achieved concrete results concerning unpaid wages of hundreds of workers (*Rizospastis*, 2008h: 15) and worker's dismissals (*Rizospastis*, 2008b: 18).

I had the opportunity to discuss the legal aspect of the trade union struggles for wokrers' rights, in the interview with Athens-based lawyer Vasilis Archimandritis. He often contributes to PAME activities, ranging from seminars on labour law changes to court representation, and he provided an illuminating view of the distinctive features of union-based, class-oriented labour rights lawyering. Court representation in this context ranges from taking legal action against employers to offering legal support to unions in cases such as a strike ban. Another crucial aspect of the role of union-based lawyering is to inform the workers about their rights. To this end, Archimandritis often participates in the general assemblies of unions such as the TUTCLWA, as well as workplace visits and unannounced inspections by PAME trade unionists.

In certain cases, Archimandritis has sued employers for unpaid wages, and he referred to a particular suit he brought in court where he represented Bangladeshi workers in the General Recycling SA plant in Aspropyrgos. For several years, PAME has made concentrated efforts to organise the mainly Bangladeshi workers in this factory (*Rizospastis*, 2009d: 9; 2014b: 10; 2015c: 24).[198] Based on his overall experience, Archimandritis explained that while he always tries to exploit all possible legal avenues in favour of the workers, they often invest too much hope in the legal struggle. He warned that it is wrong to over-emphase the importance of the legal struggle at the expense of collective action and pointed out that the legal system has many loopholes that favour employers.

[198] In the previous chapter, I also detailed the role of the UIW in this factory particularly noting the indefinite general strike that started at Christmas 2014.

In the specific lawsuit against the employer in the General Recycling SA case, while the court ruled in favour of the workers, the employer never paid them their wages and there were no legal ramifications for this. However, as Archimandritis commented, the success in that case was that a core group of 15–20 Bangladeshi workers who initially played an organising role in the factory prior to the court case are still active today in the daily struggles and PAME. I conclude that this is a definition of success that goes beyond this specific case and captures the distinctive feature of a type of lawyering that works alongside the class-oriented trade union and labour movement.

10.5 The Role of the Trade Unions of PAME during the Crisis: The Story of Ahmet Mustafa

I was introduced to Ahmet Mustafa by Archimandritis, and we met at the PAME-affiliated headquarters of the Union of Employees in Commerce-Retail of Athens (UECRA) in the summer of 2019. Mustafa was born in Greece in 1984 to Egyptian parents and was raised in the Athens areas of Vathis Square, Victoria Square and Agios Panteleimon. He said of his school years:

> *I had experienced racism at school, either concealed or straightforward. Some teachers pretended they didn't remember my name and were calling me Abdul, Muhammad etc. To give another example, the student with the highest grade carried the Greek flag in the parade. Despite having the highest grade, I was excluded because of my immigrant origin. I could not become the flag-bearer, because, according to some parents, I was not Greek and it was unacceptable to carry the flag (…) Racist incidents were even more frequent against our classmates with Albanian origin.*

During the 2000s, Mustafa studied studied economics at Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB). Active in the struggles of the student movement, he participated in the All-students Unionist Movement (PKS)[199] and served on the student union's board of directors. He commented on his political formation:

> *I came to realise how things were happening and why they were happening this way. They took a certain political meaning in my mind. (…) When you don't see the bigger picture, things are*

[199] The PKS is the student group of the Communist Youth of Greece (KNE).

> *fragmented [and] you cannot perceive the relations between them. For example, you don't have access to education and health care and you can't understand that this is related to certain political choices and is not the result of bad luck.*

After the death of his father, Mustafa had to interrupt his studies, and since 2008 he works in the commerce and retail sector in supermarket chains. Mustafa became very active in the UECRA and in the company-based union at his workplace. He was elected as a delegate in his workplace union in 2012 and, later, to UECRA's board of directors, in which he still serves as general secretary. Mustafa shed light on the struggles in the commerce and retail sector, focusing on the participation of immigrant workers. First, it is worthy to mention that he played a crucial role in an important struggle that took place in the supermarket chain where he was working at the time. In 2016, it applied for bankruptcy procedures, leaving more than 12,000 employees in uncertainty. With the support of PAME and the UECRA, the workers created a struggle committee and organised protests and strikes in order to protect their jobs and demand their unpaid wages (*Rizospastis*, 2016: 14; PAME, 2016). This struggle has been partially successful and strengthened the UECRA.

Second, Mustafa offered insights into immigrant participation in the UECRA, pointing out that a considerable number of immigrant workers are enrolled in the class-oriented union and often take part in its general assemblies and other activities. Notably, in the most recent union elections in summer 2019, a warehouse worker from Guinea was elected to the board of directors (*Rizospastis*, 2019: 27). Mustafa also elaborated on the difficulties of approaching and mobilising immigrant workers based on his own experiences with warehouse workers from Nigeria who were employed by supermarket chains:

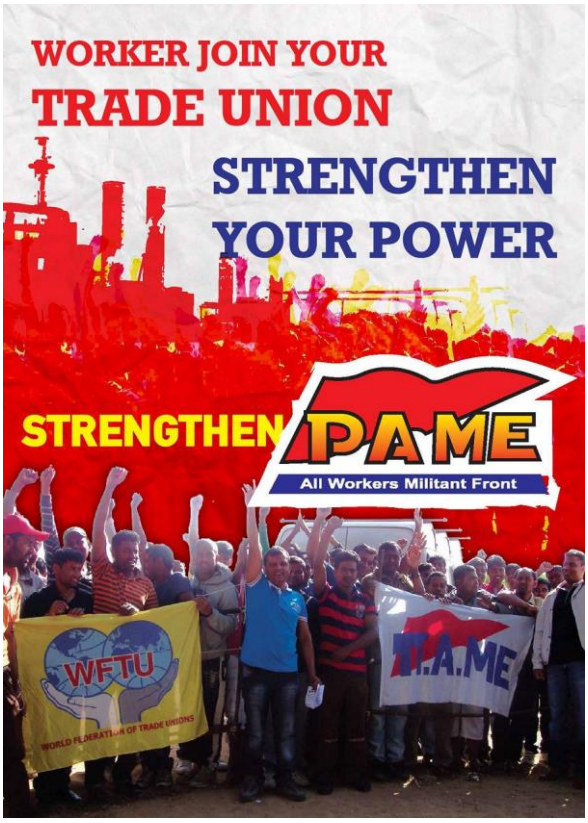
> *As a result of their harsh everyday realities, some of them were thinking that the cause for their problems are not the employers that exploit them and the capitalist system, but the Greeks in general regardless of their class position (…) Gradually, I persuaded them that the Greek workers are not the same with the Greek bosses and that the union is on their side. Building trust is of utmost importance in all cases. Some of them are now participating in the union.*

Mustafa pointed out that, compared with other employees in supermarket chains, immigrant warehouse workers face the worst health and safety working conditions, which exacerbate their poor housing and living situations. Further, he revealed that Greek supervisors systematically subjected the immigrant warehouse workers to racist treatment, adding that, especially during the early years of the Greek crisis, these supervisors were often Golden Dawn supporters: *'It is well known that many employers used Golden Dawn in order to intimidate the immigrant workers and attack the class-oriented trade unions like it happened in Perama in 2013 and elsewhere'*.[200]

Third, when discussing immigrant workers' struggles during the Greek crisis more generally, Mustafa drew my attention to two examples of strikes held outside Athens: the three-month strike of Egyptian fish-workers in the winter of 2010 in Nea Michaniona, a small town near Thessaloniki in Northern Greece, and the struggle of Bangladeshi farmworkers in the spring of 2013 in the village of Manolada in southern Greece (detailed in Chapter 11). In both cases, PAME and the KKE provided crucial organisational and political support to the workers, who faced a well-orchestrated campaign of repression. Union-busting tactics in Nea Michaniona included lawsuits claiming that the fish-workers' strike was illegal, physical violence against the immigrant workers and the PAME trade unionists by local thugs and blacklists for 'disobedient workers' made in cooperation with the Egyptian Embassy in Athens (Ios tis Kiriakis, 2010).[201]

[200] Fouskas makes a similar point based on his research on immigrant workers in several sectors in Athens. He argues that immigrant workers' experiences of racism and discrimination at work have a profound effect on their estrangement from participation in the host society's institutions, including class-oriented trade unions (Fouskas, 2012: 72).

[201] In particular, the ship owners of Nea Michaniona reached an agreement with the Egyptian Embassy officials, which took a written form and was then proposed to the fish-workers, seemingly as a solution to their problems. This proposal has been rejected by the strikers and has been widely criticised as outrageous. Suffice to say that it included clauses prohibiting union organisation for Egyptian workers and established a blacklist for 'disobedient workers' (Ios tis Kiriakis, 2010; clandestina, 2010).



28. Immigrants' Poster of PAME in the summer of 2013 (PAME, 2013).

Focusing more on Athens, Mustafa shared information on the broader efforts of the KKE and the Communist Youth of Greece (KNE) to approach and support immigrant workers in the neighbourhoods with initiatives such as Greek language lessons provided by the Centre of Youth and Workers in Patisia and Kipseli. It is indicative that between 2009 and 2015, more than 2,000 immigrant workers attended these Greek language lessons and came closer to the ideas and practice of 'struggle, class solidarity and dignity' (Panopoulou quoted in *Rizospastis*, 2015a: 22). Finally, in the 2019 European Parliament election, Mustafa was a candidate on the KKE ticket. His fluency in Arabic gave him the opportunity to discuss many issues with immigrant workers as part of his electoral campaign. Based on his experience, he concluded that immigrant workers were generally informed about the KKE and that the party's offices were a point of reference for them: '*even if they disagreed with the KKE, they respected it'*.

10.6 Seyit Aldoğan's view on the Impact of Crisis and the Public Voice of the Immigrant Associations

Seyit Aldoğan also provided a view of the serious impact of the crisis on the construction workers in Greece. Indeed, construction was one of the hardest-hit sectors of the Greek economy in the post-2008 period (Masouras, 2013). Seyit noted that a large number of immigrant construction workers fled Greece during that period, since unemployment was the only foreseeable future for them. Consequently, CWTUA faced many difficulties in confronting the new challenges and, despite its efforts, lost much of its power.[202] The declining voter turnout in the CWTUA elections is indicative of the generally low participation in the union's activities after 2008. While in 2008, 8,400 members of CWTUA participated in the union elections, the number of voters was reduced to 2,953 in 2011 and to 2,880 in 2014 (*Rizospastis*, 2011d: 22; *Rizospastis*, 2017: 11).

Before presenting Aldoğan's further reflections on the new situation after the eruption of the 2008 crisis, it is important to note that Aldoğan has never been a member of the KKE in spite of his crucial role in PAME in the early 2000s. Further, in the second half of the 2000s, Aldoğan distanced himself from PAME. In our interview, he elaborated on his disagreements with the tactics of KKE and PAME, mainly pointing out that they were gradually adopting a narrow view on alliances. At the same time, Aldoğan noted that many organisations of the Greek Left, although highly critical of the KKE's tactics, also reproduce a narrow view on alliances in their daily political practice. As a result, despite the fact

[202] The following is an indicative example of the efforts of the union to support its members. During the crisis, like thousands of people who got impoverished, many construction workers had their houses' electricity disconnected because they couldn't afford to pay the bills. CWTUA organised protests demanding that the state power company reconnects the electricity, as it happened in the case of an immigrant construction worker from Georgia (*Rizospastis*, 2011c: 18).

that Aldoğan worked closely during the 2000s with parts of the extra-parliamentary Left (e.g. NAR),[203] he argued that the Greek Left as a whole failed to rise to the occasion during the period of crisis.

Focusing more on the immigrant issues, he emphasised that the organisations of the Greek Left could have achieved a better coordination of their activities around the most immediate needs of the immigrant workers. Most often, as he explained, the different parts of the Greek Left took separate initiatives and divided the immigrant associations along their specific political affiliations. These divisions had a negative impact on the ability of the immigrant associations to coordinate their collective responses to the new challenges related to the crisis. Based on his overall experience, Aldoğan concluded that the immigrants needed a public voice of their own and a better coordination to confront high unemployment, racism and Golden Dawn. To this end, he proposed the creation of a centralised multi-ethnic representative body based on a broad and horizontal coordination of the immigrant associations.

The idea was mooted among the immigrant associations for several months and in November 2012 twenty immigrant associations organised a press conference and announced the creation of a new coordinating body (TVXS, 2012). A distinctive achievement of this effort was that it brought together immigrant associations, which established a communication channel between each other without the mediation of the Greek Left. For Aldoğan, this was an important step in order to claim their own voice, build confidence and, then, call the trade unions and the Greek Left to join their forces in action and address the mounting difficulties the immigrant and native workers were facing during the crisis on the basis of class unity. While the plans announced in the press conference were really ambitious, the implementation of the idea proved very difficult. Aldoğan noted that despite the good intentions, in practice the different parts of the Greek Left were not in favour of a broader unmediated alliance

[203] For example, in 2013 Aldoğan participated in the creation of the Movement for the Liberties and Democratic Rights of our Times (KEDDE), which aspired to contribute to the struggle for democratic rights. For more information see KEDDE (2013), available at: https://ekedde.wordpress.com/info/ (Accessed: 5 January 2021).

between the immigrant associations. At the same time, many immigrant associations prioritised their specific political affiliations instead of the commonly agreed plans. However, despite the failure of this attempt to achieve its aims in 2012, I argue that the idea of a better coordination between the immigrant associations and the ambition to overcome divisions on the basis of class unity is valuable and timely.

10.7 Summary

Chapter 10 has presented additional perspectives on militant unionism related to PAME and focused on the ties between immigrant workers and PAME's trade unions. To this end, it gave an example of alliance building between PAME and the BIWUG and elaborated on their common struggles the last two decades, explicitly referring to remarkable achievements in the garment industry in Athens, including an examination of the role of legal struggles. In addition, the chapter detailed the stories of Seyit Aldoğan and Ahmet Mustafa, which both shed light on PAME's contribution to immigrant organising in different sectors of the economy and workplaces, as well as different time periods.

Aldoğan shared his trade union experiences in the construction sector in the early 2000s through his participation in the CWTUA, as well as his contribution to the Secretariat of the Immigrants of PAME. Further, his story highlighted the alliances between different immigrant associations in the early 2000's and the creation of the Coordinating Committee of Immigrant Associations. Mustafa focused more on the impact of the crisis and provided a view of the role of the trade unions of PAME during the 2010s based on his experience as a union delegate of the UECRA and his role in the struggles in the commerce and retail sector. As a candidate in the 2019 European Parliament election on the KKE ticket, Mustafa referred to the broader efforts of the KKE to approach and support immigrant workers. On the other hand, Aldoğan, who has never been a member of the KKE and distanced himself from PAME in the second half of the 2000s, offered critical insights into trade union responses to the new challenges of crisis and racism in the post-2008 period focusing on shortcomings and hidden potentialities.

Chapter 11: Intensive Agriculture, Modern-day Slavery and Resistance. The Case of Manolada

11.1 Introduction

> *They [unions] cannot fail to enlist the socially excluded into their ranks. They must look carefully after the interests of the worst paid trades, such as the agricultural workers rendered powerless by exceptional circumstances. They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of downtrodden millions.*
>
> (Marx, 1866)

> *'I have a little food' plus 'I have none'. If from this problem the sum is 'We have a little food', the thing is on its way, the movement has direction. (…) And the little screaming fact that sounds through all history: repression works only to strengthen and knit the repressed.*
>
> (Steinbeck, 2006: 221,324)

Manolada is a small village located in the municipality of Andravida-Kyllini in the prefecture of Helia in the Peloponnese Region of Greece. Agriculture is the main economic sector of Manolada, accounting for 46% of total employment (Papadopoulos and Fratsea, 2017: 133). From a population of around 21,500 residents at the municipal level in 2011, more than 3,500 were immigrants (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2011), mainly working in the farms of the broader area. Over the last few decades, the cultivation of strawberries has rapidly expanded in Manolada, with the fruit becoming known as the 'red gold'. During the 2010s, more than half the immigrants in the area were male workers from Bangladesh, most of them undocumented newcomers (Papadopoulos *et al.*, 2018: 206).

Following the global paradigm of intensive agriculture, the cultivation methods in the area are based on overexploiting immigrant labour, transforming Manolada into a *de facto* special economic zone (Karioti, 2012) and a characteristic example of the European apartheid (Kesisoglou, 2013: 117). On 17 April 2013, this small village became an international scandal when armed guards opened fire on more than 150 workers from Bangladesh who were striking to demand their unpaid wages. As

Carastathis (2014) explains, this extreme form of violence against workers is 'an integral part of labour-capital relations in the austere Greek context' and an expression of the 'global war on migration'. In a similar vein, B. Bhandar and D. Bhandar comment on the Manolada case:

> It testifies to the increasingly hegemonic anti-immigrant policies of austerity-stricken European nations, while also reflecting modes of violence endemic to historically entrenched, racially stratified labour markets.
>
> (Bhandar and Bhandar, 2016)

The case was later brought before the ECHR by 42 Bangladeshi workers (*Chowdury and others v. Greece*). On 30 March 2017, the ECHR delivered its judgement, finding that the farmworkers' situation had become one of forced labor under Article 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights.[204] Consequently, the court found that Greece had failed in its obligations to prevent human trafficking, protect the victims, conduct an effective investigation into the offences committed and punish those responsible for the trafficking (European Court of Human Rights, 2017).

This chapter focuses on immigrant agency and explores the longstanding struggle of the immigrant farmworkers in Manolada and the role of the solidarity networks in this struggle, particularly PAME, the BIWUG, the KEERFA and the UIW. To achieve this, I conducted an interview with Morshed Chowdury, the lead applicant before the ECHR, and another with Vasilis Kerasiotis, the lawyer who represented the workers during their legal struggle. The main findings are accompanied by background knowledge based on my in-depth research involving the daily *Rizospastis* and *Ergatiki Allilegii*.

[204] Article 4 § 2 European Convention on Human Rights, *Prohibition of slavery and forced labour: No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.* (European Court of Human Rights, 2010).

11.2 Intensive Agriculture and Militant Knowledge: Lessons from Southern Italy

The harsh working and living conditions of Manolada's immigrant farmworkers are by no means an exception. As Perrotta (2015: 197) aptly describes, there is a specific link between these conditions and the intensive agriculture in the Peloponnese, Southern Italy, Saxony, Provence and Andalusia regions. Following Berlan (2002), Perrotta and others characterise it as the 'Californian model', pointing to California farms during the second half of the 20th century as an archetypical form of intensive agriculture based on the exploitation of immigrant labour. Before moving to the Manolada case, I discuss some insights into the struggle of the immigrant farmworkers in Southern Italy that constitute a framework that seriously influenced my approach.

First, I distinguish a growing literature on the specificities of working and living conditions in areas of intensive agriculture: what Perrotta and Sacchetto (2014: 80) call 'the spatial politics' of the agricultural labour process, shedding light on the topography of the workers' camps. They identify these camps as a form of housing segregation that is central to managing the labour market and workforce, and as a form of seclusion —the workers are effectively 'trapped' without technically lacking the right to spatial liberty (Perrotta and Sacchetto, 2014: 80, 77, 78). Related to the process of seclusion is the phenomenon known as the *caporalato* system. The central figure in this system is the gangmaster, the person responsible for recruiting the immigrant workers and controlling their daily lives. Most often, this person is also an immigrant and acts as an intermediary between farmworkers, the employer, the native foremen and the local population.

In order to address the complexity of the phenomenon, Perrotta and Sacchetto (2014: 83-84) develop a typology of gangmasters, covering different kinds of relationship, levels and types of control. They explain that in order to achieve their aims, the gangmasters inspire fear in the workers on the one hand, and try to establish a sense of a community based on mutual trust, respect and friendship on the other (Ibid: 82). Of paramount importance is the researchers' finding that many immigrant workers

challenge the gangmasters' role as 'monopolistic mediators',[205] and the gangmasters' power may be taken away by the workers if the degree of seclusion slackens (Ibid: 83). The example that best illustrates their position is the strike of 400–500 African farmworkers in Nardò in 2011, 'the biggest strike ever held by foreign day laborers in Italy' (Perrotta, 2015: 196):

> A partial breakup in the system of seclusion undermines the efficiency of the workforce management itself and allows the propagation of forms of self-organization among the workers.
>
> (Perrotta and Sacchetto, 2014: 80).

Perrotta and Sacchetto show that the role of the various solidarity networks, trade unions and activist groups is crucial to breaking this seclusion. Concerning the legacy of Nardò, they note that even if its direct impact on working and living conditions for farmworkers in Italy was limited, the strike 'allowed the development of forms of subjectivity on questions that go beyond the object of the uprising'. Further, taking into account the 2008 economic crisis, the resarchers argue that 'with their strike the farmworkers questioned the consensus that the worst working and living conditions were predestined for the immigrants' (Perrotta and Sacchetto, 2014: 82). They conclude that 'the struggle seems to have resulted in a clearer consciousness about their own power' (Ibid: 97).

Turning to the role of the trade unions in the struggles of immigrant farmworkers, the role of the Unione Sindacale di Base (USB) stands out. The USB is a base union created in Italy in 2010. It participates in the WFTU and is also closely related to PAME in Greece. Its enrolment in 2014 was around 250,000 (Cappiali, 2015: 72). As Cappiari describes in her research:

> When it comes to migration, the USB challenged the nation-state and the European Union regime in support of immigrants' and refugees' human rights and claimed the right of free movement for all. The specific framework deployed by the USB has been able to mobilize a great number of immigrants and refugees in the fight for recognition for their basic rights. The USB's members claim that they are not only reacting to the challenges brought about by the economic crisis and filling the gaps left by traditional unions and the withdrawal of the state,

[205] Perrotta draws attention to the fact that the gangmasters monopolise communication not only with the local population, but also with voluntary associations, journalists and, of course, social researchers (Perotta, 2015: 82).

> but that they are also putting forward a new vision of society in which the most vulnerable are given voice.
>
> (Cappiali, 2015: 73)

The USB systematically organised immigrant farmworkers throughout the 2010s. In 2018, it organised big rallies after one of its members was killed in a racist attack in southern Italy's Calabria region (World Federation of Teachers Unions, 2018). More recently, in the winter of 2020, the USB launched a fundraiser to purchase necessities and protective equipment to be distributed in immigrant farmworkers' camps in Foggia and Calabria during the pandemic (Pai, 2020); in the spring, it organised what it called 'the strike of the invisibles', where hundreds of immigrants conducted a protest march through the fields of Foggia (ANSA, 2020).

To conclude this detour through Southern Italy, I turn to the political network *Campagne in Lotta* (Fields of Struggle [hereafter 'the network']), which builds on the tradition of militant research and AoM and has been active in several agricultural areas throughout Italy. Based on their participation in the network, two researchers provide a penetrating look at its activities in the first half of the 2010s (Peano, 2016; Gambino, 2017). According to Gambino, breaking the seclusion of immigrant workers is 'the first necessary step toward a process of labor emancipation' (Gambino, 2017: 264). To contribute to this, the members of the network concentrated their efforts on building relationships of trust and mutual understanding with immigrant workers and creating spaces for sociality and action (Peano, 2016: 64, 78). In this context, the researchers explain the role of the gangmasters, who often tried to hijack the workers' meetings and hinder collective action (Gambino, 2017: 277).

In its attempts to grow closer to the immigrant farmworkers and challenge their seclusion, the network launched several projects that operated in the fields where the workers lived. For example, it established an Italian language school, a legal advice service, a pirate radio and a travelling bike kitchen (Gambino, 2017: 276). The researchers describe running these projects as a difficult process full of contradictions, mutual suspicion and often misunderstandings between immigrant and native

workers. However, as Peano argues, 'political cultures meet and sometimes clash, but in such process new ones take shape' (Peano, 2016: 84). An outstanding outcome of the network's persistent efforts was the establishment of a committee of farmworkers: *La Casa de Lavoratori* (The Workers' House) (Gambino, 2017: 277).

A crucial factor in achievements such as the above is the ability to become part of the invisible political practices and interactions that exist in the everyday life of immigrant workers —what researchers identify as 'mobile commons' (Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou and Tsianos, 2015). Further, the 'Autonomy of Migration' (AoM) approach provides an important vantage point from which to tackle the narratives of de-historicisation and victimisation, which are often reproduced by mainstream descriptions of immigrant farmworkers' slave-like conditions.[206] As Gambino insightfully comments, these narratives 'disregard the legacy of European colonialism as the basis of contemporary formations of domination and labor subordination'; they 'result in removing any agency related to the labor relations they are describing, leaving migrant workers as powerless victims of a malign fate' (Gambino, 2017: 266-267).

While I find Peano's and Gambino's insights very useful politically and methodologically, I disagree with Gambino rigidly demarcating the strategies employed by the *Campagne in Lotta* from party politics: 'This is the logic of a new form of organization, one that privileges relational commoning based on radical pedagogy, conricerca, and composition, over party pamphlets and rigid political programs' (Gambino, 2017: 281). By contrast, the main hypothesis in my approach to Manolada is based on the necessity and possibility of projects such as those outlined above, undertaken by trade unions, immigrant associations and Left parties. Further, I argue that political programmes are not *a priori* opposed to radical pedagogy and party pamphlets are not at all useless —especially if they are multilingual.

[206] Carastathis (2014) makes a similar point in her analysis of the events at Manolada.

Having set the scene, I now turn to the story of the lead applicant before ECHR: one of the workers severely injured in the farm shooting at Manolada.

11.3 Seeing Manolada through the Eyes of Morshed Chowdury

I met with Morshed Chowdury for the purposes of this research in autumn 2019 at a café in Vathis Square in Athens city centre. I was introduced to him by the lawyer Vasilis Kerasiotis. In our first phone conversation, Chowdury informed me that his knowledge of Greek was basic and proposed asking one of his friends to facilitate the interview as a translator. In fact, Chowdury arrived at the meeting with 4–5 friends who were also young Bangladeshi workers —surprisingly, one had been a co-worker of Chowdury's in Manolada in 2012–13. The interview thus became a group discussion. While some of the comments Chowdury's friends made are anonymously reported here with their oral permission, I mainly summarise Chowdury's story.

Chowdury was born in a small village in rural Bangladesh in 1982. He had been studying political science at college for around two years when his father advised him —for reasons not addressed here— to leave the country. Chowdury's long, costly and dangerous journey from Greece included passing through the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Iran and Turkey. He crossed the Evros River at the Greek–Turkish border, walking during the night in bad weather conditions with a group of immigrants, some of whom went missing along the way. Ultimately, Chowdury arrived in Athens during 2008. For the following four years, he lived in a state of limbo in the Athens city centre, without residence and a work permit or even access to the asylum procedure. During that period, he had no contact with Bangladeshi immigrant associations or any other solidarity network. It is indicative that he had not even heard of the 2008 uprising or the 2011 hunger strike of the 300. When I asked Chowdury about these events, one of his friends intervened:

> *I had heard about the hunger strike from my employers. But I arrived earlier than him [Chowdury] in Greece and I already knew some Greek at the time. He [Chowdury], like most of the newcomers, was mostly staying at home without following what was going on around that period in Athens.*

In 2012, the situation in Athens became so unbearable that Chowdury, who was still undocumented, tried to find a way out:

> *I could be arrested by the police anytime, even at my home. I had fear. If you are arrested you stay in prison for indefinite period of time. Somebody from my country, whom I knew from my journey to Greece, told me that in the countryside there is no problem with the police. There, you can find work and they don't ask for papers —that is what he told me and suggested moving to Manolada.*

As a result of this advice, in early autumn 2012, Chowdury was one of the many seasonal workers who moved to Manolada, around 260 kilometres further south from Athens, to live and work in the strawberry fields. He was shocked by the working and living conditions and showed me pictures on his mobile phone of the shanty he shared with many other workers; he described the situation as *'worse than prison'*.[207] Chowdury worked with 150–200 other Bangladeshis under the supervision of armed guards. The following excerpt describing a specific foreman is indicative of the working conditions:

> *He was often drunk and stoned and was always angry shouting at us. His eyes were red. He was always carrying a gun. Two, three times he had killed dogs in front of us only to intimidate us. (…) He threatened us that if we didn't go to work he would call the police because we didn't have papers. We were forced to work even when we were ill.*

The workers were promised a wage of 22 euros for seven hours' daily work, but after six months they had received *'not even one euro'*, as Chowdury emphasised. They were only given food and could not even buy a phone card to contact their families and friends back home. In February 2013, the workers decided to go on strike and demand their unpaid wages. According to Chowdury:

[207] As reported in the ECHR judgment, the workers 'lived in makeshift shacks made of cardboard, nylon and bamboo, without toilets or running water' (European Court of Human Rights, 2017).

> *One night we discussed all together and decided to refuse to work. We were unpaid for six months. We could not stand it anymore. Working in the fields is really hard. The whole story was about our sweat.*

Many of my questions were related to the role of the different actors in this decision to strike. Chowdury said, *'Nobody had visited us. Only those armed foremen were around. They were controlling everything'*. But I kept asking him about the role of trade unionists, journalists, NGOs and others, unconsciously reproducing the tendency of researchers who often relate every mobilisation to the role of agitators or an expansion in political opportunities.[208] The Bangladeshi workers repeated their strike action twice in March and April 2013, seemingly without any external support.[209]

On 17 April 2013, the workers' employer hired other Bangladeshis as strikebreakers. At this point, as Chowdury stated, the striking workers felt they were losing everything: *'their unpaid wages, their jobs and even the shanties in which they were living'*. They were angry and started moving towards the two employers in order to demand their rights. Some minutes later, armed guards began repeatedly shooting at the crowd of more than 150 workers with hunting guns. More than thirty workers were transferred to nearby hospitals, some severely injured. Chowdury was seriously wounded on his leg, arm, chest and head. He stayed in hospital for around two weeks.

After returning to the immigrant settlement, Chowdury found that trade unionists, journalists, NGOs and other activists were visiting daily. The workers gave as many interviews as possible to make their

[208] As Goodwin and Jasper (1999: 39) insightfully comment: 'Mobilization does not necessarily depend on expanding opportunities (except in the tautological sense), and such opportunities, when they are important, do not result from some invariant menu of factors, but from situationally specific combinations and sequences of political processes —none of which, in the abstract, has determinate consequences.'

[209] In his analysis of strike action, Darlington challenges the 'one-dimensional explanations for strikes' and explains that often, a strike begins without the contribution of any particular 'agitator' or group. Further, he points to the role of pre-existing informal communication networks between the workers and notes that an apparently spontaneous action creates varying levels of conscious leadership and organisation. Finally, he argues that independent of their role at the start of the strike, militants and political agitators can profoundly influence its overall direction (Darlington, 2006: 492-494).

voices heard. The following excerpts from the weekly newspaper of the UK-based Socialist Workers Party, published three weeks after the attack, illustrate the situation in the weeks after the shooting:

> 'I'm in so much pain', strawberry picker Morshed Chowdhury told *Socialist Worker*. Pellets were still embedded in his flesh and he could no longer move his right arm properly. (…) 'Everybody is scared after what happened', Sultan Sukdir told *Socialist Worker*. 'There were so many people bleeding, you can't imagine. And now everybody wants to join the union. Not just ones and twos but hundreds. We're not criminals, we're not beggars, we're workers', continued Sultan. 'We want our salary and our papers. And in a union we are all stronger'.
>
> (Sewell, 2013)

11.4 Breaking the Seclusion: Glimpses of the Historic 2008 Strike and its Legacy

In order to deeply understand the events of 2013, I now focus on previous moments of struggle in the strawberry fields of Manolada and, mainly, the strike of 1,500 farmworkers in April 2008, described at the time as 'the most organised strike ever put up in Greece by economic migrants' (Fotiadis, 2008). On this occasion, workers from many different countries (Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania and India) demanded unpaid wages, a daily compensation of €30 (until then it had been €22–23) and humane living conditions (*Rizospastis*, 2008a: 16). For three days, they refused to work in the fields and instead gathered in the village square, transforming it into a space of socialisation, solidarity and struggle.

For all three days of the strike, the trade unions of PAME, the BIWUG and the KKE provided organisational and political support; this proved absolutely vital for the workers, who were subject to extreme forms of violence as a way of forcing them to return to work. It is indicative that strikebreaking tactics escalated at the end of the second day of the strike to large-scale violence, with armed groups of thugs storming the workers' shanties during the night, firing guns in the air and beating immigrant men, women and children, who ran to hide in nearby valleys (*Rizospastis*, 2008c: 15; Nodaros, 2008). In addition, a group of 60–70 thugs brutally attacked and injured three KKE cadres in the square of Manolada (*Rizospastis*, 2008c: 16).

29. Immigrant farmworkers on strike in Manolada, 20 April 2008 (*Eleftherotypia*, 2008: 2).

The response from PAME and the KKE was immediate after the attacks: a multi-member delegation of the PAME-affiliated National Federation of Construction Workers of Greece, along with hundreds of members and cadres of the KKE, including an MP, arrived in Manolada to support the immigrant workers (*Rizospastis*, 2008c: 16). This solidarity played a crucial role in the workers' remarkable determination to continue their strike for a third day despite the threats and night pogrom. In addition to their physical presence in Manolada, the PAME organised solidarity protests in Athens and undertook several international initiatives together with the WFTU, while KKE MEPs brought the issue to the European Parliament (Toussas, 2018).

In order to comprehend the even bigger picture in terms of the role played by PAME and the KKE in the 2008 strike, it is necessary to consider the pre-existing ties established through various initiatives for almost a year before that strike. In particular, in May 2007, a delegation comprising *Rizospastis* journalists, KKE cadres, PAME trade unionists and the BIWUG representative visited Manolada with

the aim of establishing a communication channel with the immigrant farmworkers and reporting on their working and living conditions (*Rizospastis*, 2008d: 17). Despite the attempts of some strawberry producers and their foremen to intimidate the delegation, its members were able to converse with many immigrant farmworkers, who grasped the significance of this rare opportunity to speak out and share their everyday experiences and complaints (*Rizospastis*, 2007a: 16).

The role of Elias Ahmed, the BIWUG representative, was crucial to achieving the aims of the visit. First, he acted as the translator for his compatriot workers who did not speak Greek. Most importantly, in his capacity as the representative of a class-oriented Bangladeshi association active in the labour movement, he carried the message that the workers' first priority should be unity and participating in the common struggle with the Greek workers who were on their side (*Rizospastis*, 2007a: 16). Ahmed's role was reported in the daily *Rizospastis* as essential to gradually persuading the Bangladeshi farmworkers that the most effective tool for dealing with the strawberry producers and solving their problems was organised collective action alongside the class-oriented trade unions (*Rizospastis*, 2008d: 17).

During the period between the initial May 2007 visiting delegation and the April 2008 strike, the communication channels between the communist trade unionists and the immigrant farmworkers in Manolada were open. Their ties grew stronger following some small successes with wage payments, which many workers attributed to the employers' fear of workers' potential mobilisations. It is precisely these pre-existing ties that were activated during the strike, resulting in what Gialis and Herod (2014: 143) identify as a 'trans-spatially organised solidarity network'. The scholars argue that this trans-local capacity for solidarity was crucial for the additional reason that much of the local Greek population kept silent during the strike or was clearly opposed to the 'ungrateful immigrants' and 'invading supporters', as some locals called them (Ibid).

30. Immigrant farmworker reading PAME's statement during a protest in Nea Manolada (Pakias, 2008: 19)

Gialis and Herod (2014: 147) point out that for the workers, the strike's timing revealed 'an advanced knowledge of "where and when" to push their employers hard' (Ibid: 147). Indeed, due to strawberries' perishability, harvest interruptions are extremely costly (Papadopoulos and Fratsea 2017: 130) and striking at the right moment thus strengthened the workers' otherwise very weak bargaining power. How significant was the farmworkers' victory in 2008? The answer depends on what the main criterion is for evaluating the outcomes of the struggle. If it is changes in working and living conditions in the years after the strike —that is, wages, accommodation, access to healthcare and more— the answer is probably negative. Despite the fact that the strawberry producers were forced to negotiate and agreed to an increase of about 20% in the workers' salaries, almost nothing changed in practice.

However, if the criterion is the strike's contribution to the process of building infrastructures of dissent in the area, then it should be identified as a milestone in the collective empowerment of immigrant farmworkers and their long-term militancy. Concerning the strike's transformative impact on the workers, comparing the following two stories is illuminating. They both involve Greek journalists visiting Manolada before and during the strike, respectively. In the first, Daskalopoulou (2008) visited Manolada a few weeks before the April 2008 strike and wrote an article about the workers and their working and living conditions in the daily *Eleftherotypia*. This is how she described the workers' reaction when she approached them in the most isolated of the four 'slums':

> I don't know with how many different accents I've heard the verb 'fear'. 'I am afraid' in Bulgaric tone, 'I am afraid' in gypsy tone, 'I am afraid' in oriental tone. I am afraid in broken Greek. And in a while I would begin to start being afraid too.[210]
>
> (Daskalopoulou, 2008)

By contrast, the second story took place a few weeks later, during the strike, when the workers were more than willing to speak to journalists about their demands, thoughts and feelings. A characteristic article in the daily *Rizospastis* presented the discussions between a female journalist and a group of female farmworkers from the Balkans who were participating in the strike. The *Rizospastis* journalist described how impressed she was by the women's determination to fight back. Their stories highlight how labour exploitation in areas of intensive agriculture is aggravated by gendered dynamics and power asymmetries: the women raised awareness of their lack of access to healthcare, degrading conditions during pregnancy and childbirth, child labour and unequal family responsibilities (*Rizospastis*, 2008c: 16).

[210] Daskalopoulou was intimidated by the foremen during her visit and later received anonymous threatening phone calls related to her article. The same happened many times the period between 2008 and 2013 when a journalist or a photographer visited Manolada (Amnesty International, 2013a).

31. Pakistani farmworkers on strike in Skala Lakonias, September 2010 (*Eleftherotypia*, 2014).

To sum up, in the years after the April 2008 strike, the farmworkers became more militant and the employers more aggressive (Gialis and Herod, 2014: 143), taking advantage of the dominant culture of impunity. The workers were systematically subject to extreme forms of violence. An illustrative incident that attracted a lot of media attention was the inhumane and degrading treatment of two Bangladeshis who were roped behind a motorbike and dragged through Manolada's centre by two sheepmen who thought the immigrants had stolen their sheep (Kavadias, 2009). At the same time, PAME, the BIWUG and the KKE undertook several initiatives to maintain and renew their ties with the workers, including holding large rallies in the area (*Rizospastis*, 2008f: 19), KKE MPs visiting the workers' camps and PAME and the BIWUG delivering food and handing out presents to the immigrant children during the Easter and Christmas holidays (*Rizospastis*, 2008e: 13; 2008j: 17). PAME and the KKE also undertook initiatives to break the seclusion of immigrant workers in other areas of intensive agriculture, such as Marathon (*Rizospastis*, 2008g: 12) and Filiatra (*Rizospastis*, 2010a: 31).

To complete this section on militant activities disrupting agricultural labour processes, it is important to consider two additional facts. First, in the years prior to the events of 2013, trans-local solidarity networks multiplied and immigrant and anti-racist organisations, such as KEERFA, the UIW (Thoidou

and Pittas, 2013: 82) and others (e.g., the movement ‘Expel Racism’) (‘Expel Racism’ Movement, 2008), tried to establish a communication channel with the immigrant farmworkers. Second, some months after the UIW was formed in 2010, the first testing ground for its members and leadership was first their contribution to the four-day strike of Pakistani farmworkers in Skala Lakonias (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2010b; contra info, 2010), described as a ‘small Pakistani insurrection’ (APEL, 2015), and second their support of the hunger strike of 35 Senegalese and Pakistani farmworkers in Ioannina who were demanding their unpaid wages (UIW, 2010).

11.5 The Two Weeks That Shook Manolada (18 April 2013 – 1 May 2013)

Having elaborated on the accumulation of valuable experiences of struggle and pre-existing ties, it is now time to examine the immediate and multiform collective responses after the shootings of Bangladeshi workers in April 2013. In what follows, I draw attention to the main initiatives undertaken by PAME, the BIWUG, KEERFA and the UIW in the two weeks after the shootings, and demonstrate how the immigrant farmworkers interacted with these initiatives.

32. A protest and solidarity rally organised by the KKE in Manolada, 18 April 2013 (902.gr, 2013).

To begin with, on 18 April 2013 —the day after the attack— the KKE mobilised hundreds of members from nearby cities and villages who marched in Manolada, with a few immigrant workers joining the protest (902.gr, 2013b), and PAME organised protests in several Greek cities (Athens, Thessaloniki, Ioannina). At the head of the PAME rally in Athens were immigrant workers elected to the leadership of their unions (e.g., the TUTCLWA) and members of the BIWUG (*Rizospastis*, 2013c: 6; 902.gr, 2013c).

The WTFU issued a statement expressing solidarity with Manolada workers on behalf of 86 million workers from 120 countries across five continents:

> It is our internationalist duty to coordinate our efforts between the trade unions in the countries of origin and the receiving countries to make sure that the migrant workers find a home at the class-oriented trade union organizations.
>
> (WTFU, 2013a)

33. An assembly of immigrant workers organised by KEERFA and UIW at the central square of Manolada, 19 April 2013 (*Eleftherotypia*, 2013).

On 19 April 2013 —two days after the attack— a small delegation of KEERFA and UIW members, including Javed Aslam, arrived in Manolada and called the immigrant workers to form an assembly in

the village square (SEKbroadcast, 2013). This proved a strategic move, since more than 1,000 immigrant farmworkers from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans responded and participated in the assembly (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2013b; Georgiadis, 2013).

A key highlight of the workers' assembly was the moment when an Egyptian worker took the floor and invoked memories of the 2008 strike as a source of inspiration and guidance. His speech was applauded with enthusiasm, and the workers were reported as shouting: 'Nobody will go to work, nobody!' (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2013b).

One of the decisions of the assembly was to put out an open call to the broader class-oriented and anti-racist movement to organise a rally on 28 April 2013. On that date, Manolada and the surrounding area was transformed once again into a space of solidarity and struggle, with various protest events taking place all day. Early in the morning, a delegation from PAME and the BIWUG met with dozens of Bangladeshi workers at the scene of the shootings (*Rizospastis*, 2013d: 17). On behalf of the SIP and the World Federation of Teachers' Unions (FISE), Lamboudi delivered a strong speech on class solidarity that inspired confidence in the workers (WTFU 2013b). Dozens of Bangladeshi workers marched while holding the flags of PAME and WTFU, and as they told a reporter from *Rizospastis* (2013d: 17): 'If PAME is here, we are not afraid of anything'.[211] The trade unionists provided food, other supplies and moral support, which was absolutely vital, since the workers —dozens of whom had been injured in the shooting— were on strike, still unpaid, confronting strikebreaking tactics and police repression.

Some hours later, on the initiative of KEERFA and UIW around 1,500 immigrant farmworkers and a few hundred native workers marched from Manolada's central square to the police station in Varda, a town more than 3 kilometres away. The rally was supported by a wide range of broader political, social

[211] For the video footage from the solidarity visit of PAME and the protest at the scene of the shootings see 902.gr (2013d), available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pXEIn7rVV8 (Accessed: 2 December 2020).

and trade union forces, mainly from Pyrgos, Patras and Athens.[212] While the rally reflected the multiethnic composition of the farmworkers, the Bangladeshis stood out. Almost all the Bangladeshi associations in Greece, as well as members of diverse Bangladeshi political parties participated in the rally. According to the president of the Greek Bangladeshi Chamber, it was the biggest mobilisation of Bangladeshi people living in Greece (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2013c). While the KKE and PAME did not participate in that rally, many photographs show that the BIWUG was present, and its banner read, 'No sacrifice for the plutocracy'. Representative of the broad support for the Bangladeshi workers is the fact that a London-based Bangladeshi human rights defender who addressed the rally travelled from the UK to Manolada to deliver a message of international solidarity to the workers in person (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2013c).

The main UIW banner gave an internationalist message, reading: 'From Manolada to Dhaka, Islamabad and Cairo, workers united shall win.'[213] Throughout the protest march through the fields, the workers were passionately chanting, 'What do we want? Legal papers', 'What do we want? Freedom'.[214] According to KEERFA and the UIW (2013), this demonstration proved that rage, hope and the drive for union organising prevailed over fear, despair and individualism. Aslam commented on this drive in our interview:

> *At that particular moment, it was crucial to call the workers to join the union. Our message was simple: We have more power when we stick together. This is the only way to protect our people and fight back. Similar to Skala Lakonias and elsewhere, the workers in Manolada understood this very well and massively joined the UIW.*

[212] The participants included the Regional Labour Center of Amaliada, the local teachers' union, the extra-parliamentary Left (ANTARSYA, Workers' Revolutionary Party [EEK], etc.), (EEK, 2013) anarchist organisations (ADARA, 2013) and the Movement for Liberties and Democratic Rights of Our Time (KEDDE).

[213] The reference to Dhaka was also related to the collapse of an eight-story commercial building in Dhaka on 24 April 2013, which took the lives of 1,134 garment workers.

[214] For the video footage of the rally see InformationLibre (2013), available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=RSBEhjD9N6w&fbclid=IwAR3jGBaOC5Pu9sYLlrKNYp_Ckf4fScq8CZ_2VqUdR3YzE_YruGCc61bwwOQ (Accessed: 2 December 2020).

34. Immigrant and Greek workers march in the farms of Manolada (Epoca Libera, 2013).

Hundreds of farmworkers endorsed a resolution that demanded punishment for those responsible for the shootings and that declared:

> We proceed to join the UIW which will represent us in front of the Authorities. We also proceed to create the Union of Farmworkers 'Manolada' in order to organize the struggle for our rights alongside the labour movement in Greece and the whole world. Members can become all the farmworkers independent of their nationality, race and religion.
>
> (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2013e)

Some days later, on International Workers' Day, the BIWUG representative addressed the rally that PAME organised in Athens[215] and read a statement signed by 200 immigrant farmworkers in Manolada that stated:

[215] During the May Day demonstrations in Athens, at least three rallies are separately organised: one by the trade unions of PAME, one by the GSEE and a third by grassroots unions, autonomous labour

> For us, the immigrant workers, Manolada is a torment, but we are fighting together with PAME and the WTFU in order to stop being slaves in the 21st century. A life with rights belongs to us. To walk free, to have papers, to be paid for our toil, our work.
>
> (*Rizospastis*, 2013e: 6; 902.gr, 2013e)

These hundreds of immigrant farmworkers who joined forces with the UIW or/and PAME show that, indeed, the drive towards union organising prevailed over fear, which is an outstanding achievement.

11.6 *Chowdury and Others v. Greece*: Walking through Fire until the ECHR Judgement

I had the opportunity to discuss the legal issues of the struggle with Vasilis Kerasiotis, the lawyer who, since April 2013, offers legal support and court representation for the Bangladeshi farmworkers who were shot by the armed foremen. As he noted in our interview, he was motivated to become involved in this case because of his firm conviction that it represents a paradigmatic human rights legal case, and has the potential to be a strong driver for change in law and policy. During the spring of 2013, Kerasiotis was working for the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)[216] and was responsible for a programme combining legal advocacy, medical assistance and raising awareness of public opinion regarding the issue of racism and xenophobia (Greek Council for Refugees, 2013). As he explained, the communication channel with the immigrant farmworkers was established through 'proactive outreach':

> *I visited Manolada with some colleagues 2–3 days after the shootings. We went directly to the hospital. The first one we met was Morshed Chowdury. He was suspicious in the beginning. It was reasonable. The workers were in a state of shock, lying in a hospital bed, shot for asking their wages. We needed time to build trust. And this proved to be the secret in the long run.*

collectives, the extra-parliamentary Left and anarchist collectives. In 2013, KEERFA and the UIW participated in the third rally (*Ergatiki Allilegii*, 2013d).

[216] The GCR is an old NGO, active since 1989 in the field of asylum and human rights in Greece.

Three armed guards, as well as the strawberry field owner, were arrested two days after the incident and remained in custody until the trial. According to the indictment, all four defendants were on trial for the repeated offence of human trafficking. At first, the foremen were also charged with attempted murder and instigation, but the initial indictment against them was finally changed to 'serious and dangerous injuries'. Before discussing their trial in the Mixed Jury Court of Patras, it is important to provide some legal details that will shed more light on the case.

Kerasiotis explained that while the supreme court prosecutor was right to direct the investigation within the framework of labour trafficking, the police and the judicial authorities failed to conduct a proper criminal investigation. For example, only 35 individuals were granted 'victim of trafficking' status: the 31 workers who were injured, plus four immigrants who acted as 'team leaders' and brought the injured workers to the hospital. However, there were more than 150 workers who were not granted 'victim of trafficking' status and were in constant fear of deportation, even though they were present during the shooting and were working for the same employer under the same conditions. Although clear indicators of forced labour and trafficking were in place, the police did not even approach these workers.

As a result, the main legal challenge at this stage was to locate these workers and persuade them to take legal action. Indeed, Kerasiotis and his colleagues found 120 Bangladeshi workers of the same employer who informed the prosecutor that they had also been subject to trafficking and had been present during the shooting. However, these complaints were overlooked by the prosecution and the case of the 120 was not tried together with the case of the 35.

On 30 July 2014, the Mixed Jury Court of Patras delivered its judgement in the case of the 35, which was a major legal defeat for the immigrant farmworkers and the solidarity movement. This unanimous judgement by three judges and four jurors acquitted the four defendants of labour trafficking. Two of

the three armed guards were convicted of causing dangerous bodily harm, but their sentences were commuted to fines.

As Kerasiotis explained, it was evident from the very beginning that the president of the court had adopted a very narrow definition of human trafficking. However, Kerasiotis added that he felt confident after reasoned pleading by the prosecutor. Indeed, the prosecutor in this case found that the crime of trafficking had been established and the employer bore criminal liability under Article 323A (trafficking in human beings) (Angeli, 2016). However, the court found that the facts were not sufficient to substantiate the existence of exploitation in the context of trafficking, since the conditions of an absolute surrender were not met.[217] According to the judgement, full deprivation of autonomy and liberty is necessary for a crime to qualify as trafficking in persons. As Kerasiotis commented:

> *In that respect, the judgement implied unawareness of the legislation and was clearly opposed to the international evolution of legal theory and jurisprudence on trafficking for labour exploitation. In fact, it was a contra legem interpretation.*

The second defeat came some days later, on 4 August 2014, when the territorially competent prosecutor rejected the requests of all 120 suitors.[218] The third defeat came three months later, at the end of October 2014, when the prosecutor found that the legal requirements for cassation were not met.[219] As a result, the part of the Assize Court judgement dealing with human trafficking became irrevocable. As Smith insightfully commented in *The Guardian* at the time, the main challenge for the solidarity movement after these defeats was to prevent resignation and 'an almost fatalistic acceptance that this is the life meted out to those who go "undocumented"' (Smith, 2014).

[217] A critical reading of the interpretation of consent, authentic will and vulnerability in this particular judgement can be found in Angeli's (2016) commentary.
[218] The workers exercised their right to appeal, which was rejected again on January 2015 by the Prosecutor of the Court of Appeals of Patras.
[219] Because the verdict by the Mixed Jury Court was unanimous, the only remaining legal action for the lawyers for the civil parties to the trial was to submit a request to the Prosecutor of the Supreme Court to seek cassation to set aside the trial outcome and institute a new trial.

Several initiatives had been undertaken during and after the 2014 trial. To cite some examples, in July 2014, KEERFA and the UIW were part of a broad solidarity initiative organised by the SYRIZA-affiliated Solidarity4All network, which delivered food supplies and medicine in Manolada (Solidarity4All, 2014).[220] In addition, KEERFA and the UIW organised events in many neighbourhoods of Athens and other cities, inviting some of the protagonists of the struggle in Manolada to be present and to stand up for their mobilisation (Pittas, 2014a). Further, they encouraged the immigrant farmworkers to attend the court hearings, provided transportation from Manolada to the Patras Court, publicly denounced witness intimidation and staged a sit-in with the participation of the immigrant farmworkers immediately following the verdict (KEERFA, 2014b). PAME also undertook various initiatives during and after the trial, the most important of which was a seminar co-organised with the Regional Labour Center of Amaliada[221] on the topic 'Immigrants: Duties and obligations of the trade union movement' in which a few immigrant farmworkers from Manolada participated (PAME, 2014).

In our interview, Kerasiotis elaborated on the impact of the legal defeats on the workers' confidence:

> *Have you ever wondered why the applicants before the ECHR were only 42 and not 150? (…) After three major legal defeats, it was really difficult to persuade them that it was worth appealing to the ECHR. As you can imagine the psychological burden was enormous. We had to walk through the fire to reach the ECHR.*

The situation was even more complicated due to the farmworkers' internal divisions and hierarchies. Kerasiotis specifically referred to the *'commandos'*, whose role is similar to the gangmasters in

[220] Notably, the workers of the occupied self-managed factory of VIOME in Thessaloniki also participated in this solidarity initiative in Manolada.

[221] The president of the Regional Labour Centre of Amaliada was a longstanding member of PASOK and PASKE, the PASOK-affiliated trade union wing. In 2010 she resigned from PASOK, and in November 2013 she also resigned from PASKE and decided to join the trade unions of PAME. As she noted at the time, the solidarity with the immigrant workers in Manolada played a crucial role in her cooperation with the members of PAME and influenced her political decision (Panagiotara in *Rizospastis*, 2014a: 6). This story indicates how this solidarity with the immigrant farmworkers created favourable terrain for new alliances in the trade union and labour movement.

Southern Italy. He described them as *'populists, who manage to convince their co-nationals that they should be grateful to them for having jobs and protection'* and added:

> *They have a dual role. There are even cases when someone might be a 'commando', but still reliable. It took me years to understand 'who is who'. It's very complicated. (...) Their main role is the exercise of control in the daily life of the workers. This is why it proved so difficult for KEERFA and others to build a union in Manolada.*

Another set of difficulties that Kerasiotis highlighted was the insufficient support from the civil society. He remarked, *'the last six years this story has whitened my hair and debunked a lot of myths about the NGOs'*, pointing out that while the GCR and the Hellenic League for Human Rights (HLHR)[222] met the court fees and provided the lawyers, the civil society as a whole failed to rise to the occasion of the Manolada case. He located the problem in an underestimation of the case's potential, noting that many realised this potential only after the ECHR's landmark judgement. Kerasiotis' motivation was decisive in persuading the 42 Bangladeshi workers to take the case to court. Kerasiotis also secured funding and brought together an international group of lawyers living in Athens, Amsterdam and London, who closely cooperated and worked the arguments for the case. As a result, on 27 April 2015, the lawyers of the GCR and the Open Society Justice Initiative submitted the application to the ECHR on behalf of the 42 immigrant farmworkers.

In March 2017, when they were informed of when the ECHR would deliver its judgement, the two NGOs organised a joint press conference to comment on that judgement on the day it was handed down (Greek Council for Refugees, 2017). Chowdury was invited to represent the immigrant workers

[222] Set up in 1936, HLHR is the oldest human rights organisation in Greece. It was dissolved by the dictatorship of the 4th of August 1936, reinstituted in 1953, dissolved again by the dictatorship of 1967 and set up again after the fall of the junta (1974), constantly active since then. For further information, see Hellenic League for Human Rights (n.d.), available at: https://www.hlhr.gr/en/b/identity-history/ (Accessed 6 Jan 2021).

in that press conference, since he had been chosen as the lead applicant before the ECHR. This was his first statement as soon as he learnt of their legal victory:

> We are very pleased and excited by today's judgment. The Greek court's earlier acquittal of the farmers for the violations was a great disappointment to us. We hope that the Greek government will learn from our experiences and recognize our important role in the Greek society.
>
> (Chowdury in Open Society Justice Initiative, 2017)

The court upheld the workers claims for compensation, ordering the Greek Government to pay the hospitalised workers €16,000 each and the other workers €14,000 Euros. The total award of compensation is €588,000 (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2017). Kerasiotis described *Chowdury and others v. Greece* as a leading case in European human rights law, and the first case ever examined by the ECHR on forced labour and trafficking in the agricultural sector. In that respect, it represents a significant contribution to the struggle against trafficking in human beings and forced labour.[223] However, as Kerasiotis added:

> *Strictly speaking, the Manolada case is only potentially 'strategic litigation' forasmuch as the Greek state does not adopt the appropriate measures to guarantee safe working and living conditions in Manolada and the agricultural sector in general.*

In his view, reforming Greek immigration laws on residence and work permits for agricultural workers and systematic anti-trafficking training for law enforcement officials are two important steps to prevent future cases like Manolada. In September 2020, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, supervising the execution of the ECHR judgement, decided to close the case simply because the compensations by the Greek State have been paid, despite the fact that the situation on Greek farms remains essentially the same and is affecting a wider range of migrant workers, including asylum

[223] The group of experts responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties identified it as an important contribution to European human rights law in recognising the complex and subtle forms of coercion that underpin trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation (GRETA, 2018).

seekers (PICUM, 2020). As the NGO Generation 2.0 RED (2020) stated, 'the supervision of Greece is over, but "Manolada cases" remain'.[224]

11.7: Counter-hegemonic Projects in the Agricultural Fields and the Unfinished Struggle for Real Change

The workers' decision to rise up on 17 April 2013 exemplifies, in my view, the moment when 'exasperation accumulates to the point of eruption' (Darlington, 2006: 492). The strike, the union organising and all the collective responses after 17 April resemble what Luxembourg articulates, in her classic work on mass strikes, about those events that 'awake class feeling and class-consciousness as if by an electric shock' (Luxembourg, 1925: 21). For Kerasiotis, the decision of the Bangladeshi workers to rise up on 17 April 2013 and demand their unpaid wages was the defining moment that revealed the entire situation and triggered everything that followed: *'The workers were, indeed, at the end of their tether. Their decision to rise up was a pure revolutionary act. It really reminds me of the uprising in Kileler'*.[225]

Based on their extensive fieldwork in the broader region of Manolada between 2007 and 2017, Papadopoulos and his colleagues (Papadopoulos, Fratsea and Mavrommatis, 2018: 207) present some interesting findings. The researchers found that 'the majority of the Bangladeshi workers do not employ open and forceful resistance acts due to the fear of being further precaritized'. They also point out the role of a few openly politicised Bangladeshi workers who 'seek for a "counter-hegemonic"

[224] With the initiative Manolada Watch, Generation 2.0. carries out ongoing monitoring of the situation in Manolada.

[225] The Kileler uprising erupted in 1910, when local farmers engaged in mass protests against the extended privileges of landowners and the limitation of their own rights. The protest was brutally suppressed by the local militia; more than four protesters were killed and many were wounded.

movement in the strawberry fields' (Ibid: 207). The researchers conclude that the majority of Bangladeshi workers are not passive observers and seem quite open to the militant minority.

In their approach, they see migration and class analysis in tandem, highlight the relationship between precarity and agency, identify the crucial role of 'left-wing facilitators' and understand immigrant labour as a visible political actor (Ibid: 207). Moreover, their work brings into focus the 'ethnic hierarchies' among the immigrant farmworkers, which are based on divisions created along the axes of ethnicity, employment position, education, legal status (regular/semi-regular/irregular) and time in Greece (Ibid: 204, 206). The Bangladeshis are in the worst position: they lack access to upward social mobility and their situation is described as 'labour/spatial entrapment' (Ibid: 206).

My interview with Chowdury provided the opportunity to discuss his thoughts on the solidarity movement and the ECHR judgement. In particular, Chowdury described his satisfaction with the level of support they received from the solidarity movement. He identified KEERFA and PAME as political groups helping foreign workers, but did not know about their broader activities or political backgrounds: *'for us, all those who helped us were good people'*. By contrast, when I asked about the role of the Bangladeshi Embassy, one of his friends rushed to answer: *'they joined only for the photos. They never really helped us'*. Concerning the judgement, Chowdury noted that he was happy to receive compensation from the Greek state, but disappointed that the workers never received their unpaid wages, which was their demand in the first place. He also emphasised Kerasiotis' role: *'Vasilis [Kerasiotis] was working tirelessly for our case. He helped us a lot. When he told us that we could ask help from Europe, we did it because we believe in him'*.

A particularly interesting point that arose during the interview was the role of the boycott campaign. This campaign was not initiated by any political party, trade union or immigrant association. It started as an international social media campaign when the hashtags #manolada and #bloodstrawberries went viral, as did the message 'Next time you want to buy strawberries from Manolada, Greece, just think

that they are covered with the blood of immigrant workers' (Migrant Tales, 2013). The campaign, which rapidly spread far beyond the usual reach of the solidarity movement, led several supermarkets in Greece to refuse to sell strawberries from Manolada, and had a serious impact on strawberry exports. Chowdury noted that all the workers were impressed to hear about the boycott campaign. As his translator added: *'It's true. A shiver runs up our spine every time we hear about the boycott'*.

When I asked Chowdury if he wanted to add a final comment at the end of the interview, he pointed at his head, showed me the pellets that were still embedded in his flesh and said: *'When they opened fire, I thought I would not get out alive. When I think of what happened there, I can't find the words to express myself. What happened to us must never happen again'*.

This 'never again' is precisely the issue at stake, considering that the working and living conditions of farmworkers in Manolada remain as harsh as they were in the past,[226] and the 'Manolada cases' continue and multiply. For example, in the beginning of 2020, an employer shot three Indian farmworkers who were asking for their wages in the small town of Marathon near Athens (*Rizospastis*, 2020a: 26). In this and other cases, the solidarity networks related to PAME and KEERFA organised protests and continue their efforts to organise immigrant farmworkers throughout Greece. In light of the challenges ahead, I conclude this chapter with two proposals that potentially contribute to the unfinished struggle for real change:

A Coordinating Committee of the Militant Actors

Through a parallel examination of PAME and the BIWUG on the one hand and KEERFA and the UIW on the other, this chapter has attempted to bring into focus certain militant actors that have systematically contributed to the struggles of immigrant farmworkers in Manolada and elsewhere in

[226] It is indicative that in 2018 a fire destroyed the camp of hundreds of Bangladeshi farmworkers in Manolada (KEERFA and UIW, 2018; PAME, 2018; Zarianopoulos, 2018).

Greece. I argue that a higher level of cooperation in the struggle between these actors could prove crucial to addressing the challenges ahead. For example, PAME and the UIW could achieve a better coordination of their campaigns in agriculture and allied sectors. In that respect, the achievements of the trade unions of PAME, such as the National Federation of Workers in Food Industries of Greece,[227] and the achievements of the multiethnic UIW could appear in a more positive light other than that of competing modes of coordination. This specific direction could also contribute to a higher level of cooperation between the different immigrant associations, such as the BIWUG and the Pakistani Community.

For the Civil Action by the Labour and the Anti-racist Movement in the Trials of Modern-day Slavery

To take the first proposal one step further, I build on the legacy of the civil action in the trial of Golden Dawn and, more specifically, the high level of cooperation between the different legal teams, two of which were related to PAME and KEERFA, respectively. In my view, this legacy highlights the possibility of joint legal strategies that protect labour rights (e.g., claiming unpaid wages), combat forced labour and trafficking and put the maximum pressure on Greece to comply with ECHR judgements such as that of *Chowdury and others v. Greece*. A crucial challenge for this proposal would be to guarantee its financial sustainability and independence.

11.8 Summary

This chapter has attempted to examine the situation of immigrant farmworkers in Manolada to highlight immigrant labour as a potential political actor and distinguish practices that could facilitate

[227] This Fedaration has been the main organiser of protests after the shooting in Marathon in the beginning of 2020 and has undertaken several successful initiatives to organise farmworkers and create immigrant committees (*Rizospastis*, 2020b: 14).

immigrant organising and struggle. With this in mind, it situated the working and living conditions in Manolada within the global context of intensive agriculture and the overexploitation of immigrant labour. Subsequently, the chapter has provided some useful insights on the situation in Southern Italy regarding housing segregation, the condition of seclusion and the role of the gangmaster, all of which were relevant to the Manolada case. Further, the examples of the USB and the *Campagne in Lotta* illustrate the need to bring together transnational experiences of struggle in the agricultural sector and identify best practices to undermine and break the system of seclusion.

Further, the chapter reconstructed the stories of the Manolada farmworkers' struggle, focusing on the historic 2008 strike and the large-scale protests after the shooting of the workers in 2013. In both cases, the role of political forces was explored, showing the importance of physical presence of supporters and the establishment of an alternative communication channel. The findings reveal that despite the extreme forms of violence, police repression and strikebreaking tactics to which the workers were exposed, the drive for union organising and the determination to continue the struggle prevailed over fear.

Through a parallel reading of political mobilisations and the legal struggle, the chapter has shown that at every turning point, after the legal defeats, as well as the legal victory in the ECHR, a more organic link between the political forces and the 'legal' element could maximise the potential of their dialectical interrelation, as with the trial of Golden Dawn. In a similar vein, the chapter pointed to an abolitionist-type movement to eliminate future Manolada cases and argued for a stronger cooperation between the different forces of the labour and the anti-racist movements that have been —and still are— active in Manolada.

Part D

Chapter 12: Is There No Alternative? From the Bailout Referendum to the EU–Turkey Deal

12.1 Introduction

After winning the January 2015 legislative election with an explicitly anti-austerity agenda, the SYRIZA-led government began negotiations with Greece's three main creditors (the EU, ECB and IMF, known as the Troika) regarding the terms for further bailout loans. In the early morning of 27 June 2015, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announced that a referendum would be held on 5 July 2015: the Greek people would vote on whether they approved of the new bailout programme the troika had proposed to Greece. The subsequent victory of the 'Oxi' ('No') vote (61.3%) has been aptly described as a 'tremendous show of determination from the part of the subaltern classes' (Sotiris, 2017a). But a week after the referendum, Tsipras returned to Athens from Brussels having agreed to a third Greek bailout on neo-colonial terms, worse than the ones rejected by the 61.3% of the voters in the referendum.

In parallel, 2015 has been characterised as the 'long summer of migration' (della Porta, 2018: 2), or 'a historic year in terms of the scale and dynamism of its migrant movements', with around 850,000 people landing on the Greek Aegean Islands (Ataç, Rygiel and Stierl, 2016: 528). In view of these events, an explosion of solidarity practices occurred, with mass participation from Greek society. Most of these immigrant and refugees followed the Balkan route in order to reach Northern Europe. However, after the EU–Turkey refugee deal in March 2016, the Balkan route closed and tens of thousands refugees were trapped in Greece.

While an extensive analysis of the above turning points is beyond the scope of my research, the aim of this chapter is twofold: first, to link these two moments, the debt crisis and the so-called 'refugee crisis', and second, to offer a glimpse into the reality of 2015 and the post-2015 solidarity refugee movement. To this end, the chapter presents a critical assessment of Slavoj Žižek's positions on the referendum and refugees; it then provides short summaries with preliminary findings from three life-history interviews, pointing to possible directions for further research.

12.2 Debates on the Referendum: A Critical Engagement with Slavoj Žižek

The Greek bailout referendum has sparked harsh debates among progressive and radical intellectuals. Could the SYRIZA leadership have avoided a new austerity package despite mounting anti-democratic pressure from the troika? What could have been a viable alternative, if any? In line with his view on Greece's post-colonial bind (Chapter 3), Samaddar (2016: 66) relates the defeat to Europeanism, or 'the sigh of a defeated Left', as he describes it. For Samaddar, 'rupture' is the key concept that can illuminate lessons from the 'autonomous act of the popular "Oxi"' (Ibid: 14)[228] and the subsequent capitulation of the Greek Government: 'Rupture: this is the most important word, and the most important point is that the way the Greek and the European Left approached the question was one of continuity and not rupture' (Samaddar, 2016: 64).[229]

Slavoj Žižek is one of the thinkers criticised in Samaddar's work, since, as he argues, Žižek proposes to reconcile to defeat instead of devising a way forward based on the experiences of struggles

[228] As Samaddar notes: 'if one recounts the possibility of rebellious actions in future days, "Oxi" will remain the central political antagonism of the years to come' (2016: 14).

[229] While this point is not further addressed in this thesis, I should note that the discussion on the referendum has been a thorny issue among the Greek Left. To cite some examples of the different positions: ANTARSYA has campaigned to support the 'Oxi' vote calling for an immediate rupture with the Eurozone and the EU, while KKE (2015) was in favour of abstention or proposed an 'invalid' vote with KKE's demands written on a black ballot paper. Finally, the third Greek bailout in sharp contrast with the result of the referendum led a large number of SYRIZA members and cadres to resign from the party.

(Sammadar, 2016: 19). A closer examination of Žižek's position on the referendum is revealing in this respect: Žižek (2017: 72) relates Grexit to a full-scale social and humanitarian crisis and even estimates, with no evidence, that Grexit would 'have caused a further 30 per cent drop in the standard of living and a collapse of social life (lack of medicines, of food etc.) leading to an emergency state' (Žižek, 2019b). Samaddar is highly critical of this kind of commentaries on Grexit and describes them as 'typically model-building exercises for the prophesied doomsday' (Sammadar, 2016: 15).

As Žižek (2019b) later expressed it, in 2015 everything hinged on avoiding Grexit and finding a third way. I claim that there are no shortcuts to breaking away from imperialist networks and capitalist exploitation. In the specific Greek context, Žižek's call for a third way between austerity and Grexit expressed the desire for people's victory without rupture —what I identify, paraphrasing Žižek (2012a), as a 'decaffeinated' Augenblick,[230] a decisive moment that does not smell of a radical act. My hypothesis is that a basic reason for Žižek's position on the referendum is because he underestimates what has been described as the post-colonial bind of a debt-ridden and peripheral country such as Greece (Samaddar, 2016). Of course, Žižek is neither the first nor the last to reject Grexit as a viable alternative to the troika's neo-colonial treatment of Greece. However, he takes this a step further and rejects the concept of the alternative altogether:

> The dream of an alternative is a sign of theoretical cowardice; it functions as a fetish that prevents us thinking through to the end the deadlock of our predicament. In short, the true courage is to admit that the light at the end of the tunnel is most likely the headlights of another train approaching us from the opposite direction. There is no better example of the need for such courage than Greece today.
>
> (Žižek, 2015a)

[230] This is how Lukács defines Augenblick: 'What is a "moment"? A situation whose duration may be longer or shorter, but which is distinguished from the process that leads up to it in that it forces together the essential tendencies of that process, and demands that a decision be taken over the future direction of the process' (Lukács, 2000: 55).

I argue that identifying the dream of an alternative as a sign of theoretical cowardice is a self-defeating position that, despite good intentions, leads Žižek to fall into the trap of the 'There is no alternative' (TINA) narrative. While it is true that the discussion on the alternative in the Greek case is more complicated than a 'yes or no' to Grexit, Žižek's approach offers no meaningful answer that can potentially break any kind of political deadlock.

In contrast, Kouvelakis, points the way forward, as the following comment illustrates:

> The paradox of the Greek case is that, although it ended in disaster, at some moments it gave us a glimpse of what an alternative might be. The sequence of the referendum was vital in relaunching the process of popular radicalization. It showed a way to combine electoral success and popular mobilization. It was an important event: the first time a people has defiantly said 'No' to an ultimatum from Europe's ruling powers, on such a scale. We should remain faithful to the meaning of that event and reject the dominant narrative, which asks us to pretend it never happened.
>
> (Kouvelakis, 2016a: 70)

12.3 Refugees and the Protection of the European Way of Life: Why Žižek Got It So Wrong

The position that Žižek adopted on the referendum was not the only time he got it wrong. The way he positioned himself concerning the refugees, as expressed in a series of articles during and after 2015, received heavy criticism for staunchly defending Fortress Europe (Sørensen, 2015) and adopting 'the condescending moralistic standpoint of European (white) supremacism' (De Genova, 2017: 15). In particular, Žižek sees the 'European way of life' as homogeneous and superior to those of refugee communities. Consider the following:

> Refugees should be reassured of their safety, but it should also be made clear to them that they have to accept the area of living allocated to them by European authorities, plus they have to respect the laws and social norms of European states.
>
> (Žižek, 2015b)

Leaving no room for misunderstanding, Žižek adds: 'such a set of rules privileges the Western European way of life, but it is a price for European hospitality' (Ibid). Based on the above, it is not an

exaggeration to argue that Žižek's analysis of the threat that refugees seemingly pose to 'us' (*sic*) is in line with the rationale behind Fortress Europe and resembles the portfolio of the European Commissioner for Protecting the European Way of Life. Answering to his critics, Žižek asserts:

> The reason one should focus on different ways of life is not that they have inherent value but that, if we do not confront these types of tension openly, the universal class struggle for emancipation (and the *only* true social universality today is that of class struggle) will be displaced on to the fake 'clash of civilizations'.
>
> (Žižek, 2017)

While it is true that tensions should be openly confronted, this task is doomed to fail forasmuch as the Western values are assumed to be superior ones on a seemingly hierarchical scale.[231] Further, Žižek offers no particular analysis of social classes, which is one of the main reasons he blatantly underestimates the actuality of common struggles and the potentiality of class unity between immigrant and native workers. Indicative of his lacking class analysis is his description of the global protests in 2011, wherein he explicitly refers to Greek square's movements as the 'revolt of the salaried bourgeoisie' in danger of losing its privileges (Žižek, 2012). Chrysis insightfully comments that Žižek adopts a rather narrow definition of the proletariat and draws a wrong conclusion as regards the existence and activity of a non-existent 'new bourgeoisie':

> Under the impact of a post-Marxist eclecticism, he [Žižek] confuses the objectively determined class position(s) of the protesters as proletarians with the ideological illusions many of them share as former members of the middle class and petty bourgeoisie.
>
> (Chrysis, 2018: 250)

I argue that Chrysis' critical insights can also explain why Žižek (2017: 35; 2019a; 2019b) is wrong to assume that immigrants and refugees cannot be considered 'proletarians', or 'nomadic proletarians', as Badiou (in Nail, 2018) calls them. In particular, Žižek confuses the objectively determined class

[231] In this context, Gramsci's writings are valuable today for solving the problems of multinational and multicultural coexistence. As Ursula Apitzsch (2016: 25-26) notes: 'He [Gramsci] does not reduce the problems associated with differing degrees of modernity to the relationship between native people and foreigners, but defines these differences as a problem of modern consciousness generally'.

position(s) of the vast majority of immigrants and refugees with their ideological illusions, or even worse the seemingly inferior cultural identity Žižek attributes to them. This confusion is, then, combined with Žižek's ignorance about various grassroots efforts towards multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural and multi-gendered communities of struggle and co-existence across Europe.

Conversely, to do justice to Žižek, I note that in 2011 he had a sophisticated understanding of the stakes of a decisive immigrant struggle examined in this thesis. Regarding the hunger strike of the 300 immigrant workers, he stated:

> My full solidarity with you —you are fighting for much more than just your rights. You are fighting for what Europe will become. Those who ignore or oppose you are a real threat to the European legacy of universal emancipation. In our times of nationalist xenophobia, movements like yours offer a hope that emancipation is not a dead word.
>
> (Žižek, 2011)

While the solidarity message is to the point, the problem is that Žižek's theoretical work and interventions are, almost always, inconsistent and self-contradictory. His eclecticism becomes even more absurd because it is always possible that he is not talking seriously, while his jokes and comments are often offensive.[232] In light of Žižek's exchanges with non-European philosophers, Dabashi offers a critical assessment that summarises Žižek's main limitation:

> Žižek and his fellow philosophers are oblivious to those [alternative] geographies because they cannot read any other script, any other map, than the colonial script and the colonial map with which Europeans have read and navigated the world; conversely they cannot read any other script or map because they are blinded to alternative geographies that resistance to that colonialism had written and navigated.
>
> (Dabashi, 2015: 10)

[232] In one of his talks in Greece in 2012, Žižek referred to the KKE as 'the party of the people who are still alive because they forgot to die' (Žižek, 2012c). In every respect, this is nothing more than a reactionary and anti-communist comment. In a similar inappropriate and offensive way, some years earlier Žižek (2007: 7) mocked Subcomandante Marcos, the former military leader and spokesman for the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), calling him 'Subcomediante', as a way to criticise the struggle of Zapatistas.

12.4 The EU–Turkey Refugee Deal: A Broader Perspective

The EU–Turkey deal, made in March 2016, is a statement of cooperation between the European Council and Turkey, according to which: 'All new irregular migrants and asylum seekers arriving from Turkey to the Greek islands and whose applications for asylum have been declared inadmissible should be returned to Turkey' (European Parliament, 2016). However, implementing the statement, which is based on the premise that Turkey is a safe country for immigrants and refugees, was 'incompatible with the guarantees of the existing asylum system and the level of protection of human rights which has been achieved within the international and European legal framework' (Adamou *et al.*, 2016). In fact, no agreement could better illustrate the neo-colonial immigration patterns of Fortress Europe than the EU–Turkey deal.[233]

To widen this perspective, I suggest rethinking the EU–Turkey deal as similar to (ideologically and practically) Australia's refugee externalisation policies. As Nethery and Lea (2020) point out, many refugee externalisation policies around the world are forged upon old colonial relationships. For example, Australia's two partners in its offshore processing policy, Nauru and Papua New Guinea, are its two former colonies. In August 2016, more than 2,000 leaked incident reports were published by *The Guardian* (Farrell, Evershed and Davidson, 2016). Released from inside Australia's detention camp for asylum seekers on the remote Pacific island of Nauru, these 8,000 pages provide an

[233] I should note here that my position concerning the EU-Turkey refugee deal was formed through my experiences in my professional life as a member of the Appeals Committees of Greece during the period under study (Presidential Decree 114/2010). Further, my approach was strengthened by the interview I conducted with the lawyer Eleni Spathana. After the January 2015 elections, Spathana served as an advisor to the Alternate Minister for Migration Policy and later to the General Secretary of Population and Social Cohesion. She has first-hand knowledge of the implications concerning the implementation of the EU-Turkey refugee deal, to which she is clearly opposed. Spathana is also a founding member of the GLRMR in Athens. She offered valuable comments on the following: a) the dilemmas of strategic litigation based on her participation in legal teams that brought claims against Greece to the ECHR (e.g. *Sarwari and others v. Greece* and *Safi and others v. Greece*), b) serious human rights violations in the context of the criminalisation of Turkish and Kurdish political refugees' political activities.

illuminating view of the routine dysfunction and cruelty caused by these refugee externalisation policies.

Further, the EU–Turkey deal should be linked to the externalisation arrangements between the EU and North African countries, which build on the legacy of European colonisation of Africa. In spring 2016, the African Civil Society (2016) condemned the 'hunting policies for migrants that grow everywhere on the African continent with the support of the European institutions under the guise of the fight against 'irregular' migration'. According to the statement, illustrative of these hunting policies is the EU-funded heavily armed anti-immigration brigade in Libya. In this context, the EU–Turkey deal marks a turning point and, at the same time, aligns with the realities of the post-colonial world.

This brings us to another crucial point that relates to what Samaddar calls 'the nexus of debt and migration', revealing the deep and structural connection between the two phenomena. Along these lines, in trying to connect the Greek bailout referendum and the EU–Turkey deal, I highlight the following two dimensions. First, both the austerity package and the EU–Turkey deal were imposed on Greece by the EU based on the TINA narrative. In the first case, Greece was threatened with expulsion from the Eurozone, and in the second case, with expulsion from the Schengen Area. In fact, the Greek Government was asked to implement the neo-colonial refugee agreement with Turkey in order to keep the benefits of European integration. In both cases, the SYRIZA-led government ultimately accepted the blackmail and adopted the TINA narrative.[234]

Second, it is important to note that SYRIZA's capitulation had a serious impact on social movements. As Kouvelakis (2018) argues, these developments had a 'stunning —and lasting— effect on the political capacities of the subaltern classes, curbing the will to resist and, for some time at least, blocking the possibility of creating a subaltern counter-hegemony'. In this period of defeat and

[234] However, it should be noted that at least during the first half of 2015, there were discontinuities between the newly elected government's discourse and immigration policies compared with the pre-2015 years.

disorganisation, the impressive refugee solidarity movement kept alive the spirit of the pre-2015 struggles.

In what follows, I provide short summaries with preliminary findings from three life-history interviews, pointing to possible directions for further research.[235] I shall clarify that the refugee solidarity movement, as well as the self-organisation of refugees during this period (2015–18) in Greece, is far more complex and rich.[236] The aim of the three stories I include in the thesis is more to highlight different aspects of solidarity and the role of politicised immigrant groups in the movement. The following comment by Olga Lafazani details the context within and against which immigrant activists and their allies developed their solidarity practices:

> During the long summer of 2015 refugees were generally described as deserving compassion and help, but not as new members of Greek society who could one day demand equal rights. In contrast to the widespread stories of individuals offering solidarity to refugees, the initiatives of political groups long involved with the migrant rights movement were, to a large degree, ignored. When occasionally mentioned, these groups were described as 'suspicious' and 'strange' collectives that incited refugees to stage riots and demonstrations, while the refugees themselves were deemed ungrateful for the Greek hospitality and generosity they had received.
>
> (Lafazani, 2018: 623)

[235] At this point, it is important to note that the discussions I had with the interviewees on the bailout referendum also proved illuminating, since they included many different views and experiences. Thus, they constitute an area that requires further research.

[236] While these findings are not presented here, it is worth noting that many of the interviewees contributed to my understanding of the refugee solidarity movement and immigrant activism in the post-2008 period. In that respect, I distinguish Khatib as a characteristic example. Khatib returned to Athens after 2015 and later contributed to the creation of the the Refugees Movement for Refugees and Rights (Samidoun, 2019)

12.5 Refugee Accommodation and Solidarity Space: The Squatted City Plaza Hotel

35. The City Plaza block at a protest in Syntagma square. The banner reads: "We fight together, we will live together", May 2016 (City Plaza, 2016),

An area that would benefit from further research is the Athens refugee squats that appeared during and after 2015. While most of these squats participated in the Coordination of Refugee Squats, the projects featured important differences. Thus, a comparative perspective would be useful in order to understand the dynamics of squatting as a solidarity practice for refugees. In this context, I draw attention to the case of City Plaza, a seven-storey hotel located near Victoria Square in Athens that had been closed for seven years in 2016. One month after the EU–Turkey deal, the Initiative in Support of Economic and Political Refugees,[237] together with hundreds of refugees, occupied City Plaza and

[237] This initiative was founded in March 2016 and mainly comprised anti-racist organisations (NSSIR), radical Left organisations (ex-members of Synaspismos Youth, Left Recomposition) and the Anarcho-syndicalist Initiative Rosinante.

transformed it into the biggest self-organised refugee accommodation space in the country. As they declared in April 2016:

> We are convinced that the balance of power can be shifted in concrete practices rather than through general humanitarian appeals. In these practices the renewed version of the mantra of TINA (There is no Alternative) of repressive migration policies can be disputed and space can be gained against the far-right.
>
> (solidarity2refugees, 2016)

City Plaza operated until July 2019 and hosted over 2,500 refugees from 13 different countries during that time (City Plaza, 2019). I had the opportunity to discuss City Plaza and the refugee solidarity movement with Nasim Lomani. Lomani was born in the 1980s in the Afghanistan city of Ghazni. He left Afghanistan when he was very young, and at the age of 15, he was an unaccompanied minor working and living inside a large factory in Iran. A year later, in the early 2000s, he managed to arrive on the Greek island of Samos via Turkey. Upon arrival, he was arrested —in violation of children's rights and international protection— and charged with illegal crossing of the Greek border, resulting in a two-year prison sentence in Samos. Around 2006–07, Lomani visited the immigrant centre in Exarchia and started participating in its activities. He is active in Diktyo and NSSIR and participates in the organising committee of the annual Antiracist Festival.

It is important to situate the refugee solidarity movement during and after 2015 in the context of the border struggles of the previous years and the process of building transnational solidarity networks. To this end, a highlight of Lomani's activist experience in the late 2000s was his involvement in organising the No Border camp on the island of Lesvos in 2009 (Welcome to Europe, 2019). This 'week of common fights for freedom of movement', in which 400 activists from various countries participated, was a milestone in border struggles and a valuable accumulation of struggle experiences. Notably, coordinating the No Border camp with the struggle of immigrants in the Pagani Detention Center —the forerunner of Moria— had been victorious at the time. As the No Border activists explain: 'Ongoing rebellions from inside and demonstrations and scandalisation from outside finally led to the

closure off this “hell of Dante’s Inferno”, an important success against the EU policy of determent’ (Welcome to Europe, 2019).

In 2015, Lomani was a member of the Panhellenic Network of Antiracist and Solidarity Collectivities and the Economic and Political Refugee Solidarity Initiative. Our interview took place in July 2019, only a few days after the closure of City Plaza. It offered the opportunity to share reflections on this large-scale housing project as a practical application of the slogan ‘We live together, we work together, we struggle together’. The most important finding, which points to a possible line of inquiry for future research, relates to what Lomani identified as the ‘politicisation of solidarity’. He elaborated on specific methods of organising, intervening and building alliances, and highlighted achievements, difficulties and dilemmas, especially after the borders closed at Idomeni and the EU–Turkey deal was struck. Lomani emphasised the importance of moving past the image of refugees as ‘desperate victims’ and suggested that activist engagement should be an antidote to misery, an empowering experience that fosters creativity and experimentation in daily interactions based on a set of commonly agreed rules.

12.6 LGBTQI+ Refugees and the Role of Support Groups

A second area of research that is of particular interest and warrants further examination is the activist networks formed at the initiative of LGBTQI+ refugees and activists in solidarity with LGBTQI+ refugees. During 2016, the group LGBTQI+ Refugees Welcome was founded in Athens with the aim ‘to afford space and give voice and support to one of the most repressed and ‘invisible’ sides of the refugee ‘crisis’:

> We are queer, we are here, but we are not safe here because we are homeless, and we need your help. We come from Syria, Iraq, Congo, Palestine, Cameron, Uganda, and Colombia. Despite our diverse cultures we all suffered at the hands of homophobia in our countries of origin, and we escaped these countries to Greece to be safe. But still we do not feel safe. (…) It is of the

> utmost importance that everyone is perceived as an individual and not as a label (refugee, immigrant, trans, gay, abused, Greek, Syrian, etc.).
>
> (LGBTQI+ Refugees, 2018)

I had the opportunity to discuss various aspects of this group's activities in my interview with Ali, who is from Egypt and has lived in Greece since the 1990s.[238] Ali, a pseudonym he chose for the purposes of this research, participates in the group, supports its broader activities and offers free interpretation services to LGBTQI+ refugees. Based on his experience supporting LGBTQI+ refugees in several aspects of their daily lives, Ali noted the discrimination they faced inside and outside camps, at work, in public spaces, during asylum procedures and in various interactions with public services. He also highlighted the power of collectivity and solidarity and the determination of group members to protect themselves from discrimination and physical attacks and to fight for their rights.[239] Similar grassroots solidarity initiatives appeared during 2016 in other cities on the Greek mainland and on some of the Aegean Islands, such as Thessaloniki and Lesvos.

Part of the support for LGBTQI+ refugees involves legal services to protect their rights. My interview with the lawyer Katerina Georgiadou significantly contributed to my understanding of lawyering for LGBTQI+ rights in Thessaloniki, where I met her for this research. Georgiadou is a member of the Hellenic League for Human Rights (HLHR) and regularly offers her legal expertise to the Greek Transgender Support Association (GTSA). In her capacity as member of HLHR, Georgiadou was one of the lawyers who offered pro bono court representation to a transgender refugee from Pakistan in a

[238] To protect his anonymity, no further personal information is included in this thesis.

[239] A widely discussed cultural intervention LGBTQI+ Refugees Welcome held at the global contemporary art exhibition Documenta 14, held in Athens in 2017, can be found in a video they released (LGBTQIA+ Refugees Welcome, 2017), available at: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=263576050783139 (Accessed 29/12/2020). Further, Ali pointed out that the group actively participated in a justice campaign after the activist and human rights defender Zak Kostopoulos was lynched to death in Athens in September 2018.

case that could be identified as 'strategic litigation' for defending and advancing the rights of transgender refugees (hereafter 'the Natasha case').

Natasha arrived in Greece in 2015.[240] She worked on a farm in Skala Lakonias, where she was abused by her employer, who refused to pay her wages. This is a frequent phenomenon in the Peloponnese peninsula, as this thesis has already revealed (Chapter 11). In 2016, she managed to flee Skala Lakonias and follow the thousands of refugees moving to Idomeni, a small village in Northern Greece on the border of North Macedonia, hoping that the borders might reopen. But they never did, and Natasha was trapped in Idomeni, or 'Europe's biggest favela', as *The Guardian* described it (Smith, 2016). There, Natasha was subject to transphobic attacks from a co-ethnic and was isolated in her tent for three months in a constant state of fear. With the support of a Spanish volunteer and a Greek psychiatrist, she finally escaped Idomeni.

Natasha moved to Thessaloniki, where she found support from the local LGBTQI+ community, joined the activist group Eclipse[241] and expressed herself freely as a transgender woman. On 30 April 2018, the District Court of Thessaloniki delivered its judgement (Decision 444E/2018) and Natasha won the right to change her gender identity and name under the new Legal Gender Recognition Law (No. 4491/2017).[242] As Katerina Georgiadou explained, this new law did not include an explicit provision allowing persons not registered at the Greek Registry Office to legally change their gender and name. As a result, transgender immigrants and refugees, as well as Greek citizens who were born in another country would have been excluded from the provisions of this law if the court did not interpret the law

[240] I have not interviewed Natasha, but have mainly used the summary of her story which is available in the interview she gave to the journalists of *Deutsche Welle* (Karakoulaki and Tosidis, 2018).
[241] Eclipse was founded in Thessaloniki in 2016 with the aim of creating a safe space where refugees can connect within themselves and with the local LGBTI+ community. For more information see Eclipse (n.d.), available at: https://eclipseproject.info/index.html (Accessed 29 Dec 2020).
[242] It is important to note that in July 2020, the ECHR held that Hungary had breached its obligation to protect the right to private life under Article 8 of the Convention by rejecting the application of an Iranian transgender refugee to have his name and gender officially changed (*Rana v. Hungary*) (UNHCR, 2020)

as it did. As UNHCR Greece (2018) tweeted: 'Natasha has "made legal history" in Greece setting a precedent for others.'

During our interview, Georgiadou highlighted the importance of special provisions for trans refugees and immigrants in the relevant legislation. Further, we both agreed that the struggle for LGBTQI+ rights is often underestimated within social movement agendas, a point that certainly requires further research.

12.7 Camp as a Space of Resistance: The Squatted Lavrio Center of Temporary Stay for Foreign Asylum Seekers

The Lavrio refugee camp is a highly politicised camp located on the southeast point of Attiki in the harbour and labour town of Lavrio, one hour from central Athens, and is inhabited mostly by Kurdish refugees. It opened its gates in 1947, two years after the end of WWII, and is the oldest refugee and asylum seeker hosting facility in Greece (Dirakis, 2019: 32). In 2017, there was a debate between the Ministry of Migration Policy and the Kurdish refugees from Lavrio camp over the camp's self-governance structures and their compliance with Greek and European laws (Loez, 2018). Subsequently, the Greek state, the local authority and the Hellenic Red Cross withdrew all aid to the camp. From that point, the camp's more than 400 residents, including many families from Syria, relied only on their self-governance and the grassroots Greek, Kurdish and international solidarity movement. The former official and now squatted camp implements a self-organisation structure for its management, following the ideas of 'democratic confederalism' applied in Rojava.[243]

[243] 'Democratic confederalism' refers to a communally organised democracy that is fiercely anti-capitalist and committed to female equality, while rejecting reactionary nationalist ideologies (Knapp *et al.*, 2016). It is rooted in the ideas of imprisoned Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, who describes it as 'the contrasting paradigm of the oppressed people' (Öcalan, 2011: 33).

I had the opportunity to discuss the situation in the Lavrio camp, and the refugee solidarity movement in general, with Bercem Mordeniz. Mordeniz is Kurdish and was born in Diyarbakir in 1991. In late November 1996, her mother, Fahriye, and her father, Mahmut Mordeniz, were arrested by the Turkish police. Some days later, they were both found executed on the road from Cizre to Silopi.[244] The story of the Mordeniz couple is part of a long catalogue of political murders and enforced disappearances of Kurdish people during the 1980s and '90s that triggered the movement of the 'Saturday Mothers'.[245] Mordeniz arrived in Greece in 1998 with her older sister and brothers and was raised in the Lavrio refugee camp. The Kurdish present and past of the struggle for freedom and independence played the most crucial role in her political formation.[246] Mordeniz now lives in Athens, has finished her nursing studies and is enrolled in a journalism school.

At the start of autumn 2015, she decided to move from Athens to the island of Lesvos in order to contribute to the refugee solidarity movement. She made this decision after seeing the image of the dead body of Aylan Kurdi,[247] the three-year-old Kurdish Syrian boy who drowned in the Aegean Sea.[248] Based on her contribution to grassroots solidarity networks, as well as her later professional experience working with NGOs in refugee camps, including Moria, Mordeniz shared her thoughts on the principle of solidarity. On the one hand, she highlighted the great moments of grassroots solidarity in the most extreme conditions; on the other hand, she noted contradictions within these solidarity

[244] On 10 January 2006, the ECHR delivered its judgement in Mordeniz v. Turkey (49160/99) and found that Turkey had violated Articles 2 and 13 of the Convention regarding the investigation into the case (Alpkaya *et al.*, 2013: 23).
[245] Gathering in protest, activist group the Saturday Mothers of Turkey demanded the whereabouts of their disappeared detainees and call for accountability on the part of the Turkish Government in the protracted Kurdish conflict. For a short documentary on their activities see Das (2010), available at: https://www.womensvoicesnow.org/films/saturday-mothers-of-turkey/ (Accessed 29 Dec 2020).
[246] In addition, Mordeniz referred to the importance of the annual commemoration of the 1973 Polytechnic uprising as a crucial element for her political formation in Greece.
[247] For a discussion on this image, see Vis and Goriunova (2015).
[248] As she expressed it: *'I was shocked by the image. It reminded me who I am, where I come from and what I should do'*.

networks, including patronising attitudes and cynicism. She also drew attention to ethical dilemmas in the context of NGO activities in the camps, a subject that certainly requires further research.

Mordeniz is an active member of the Kurdistan Cultural Center and the 'Solidarity to the Kurdish political refugees of Lavrio' initiative.[249] Even though she has not lived in the Lavrio camp for many years, she regularly visits and participates in its political structures of self-governance. She emphasised the equal participation of Kurdish women in all the aspects of the camp's life in relation to their important role in the Kurdish movements in general.[250] She pointed out the differences between the politicised Lavrio camp compared with other camps and contextualised the debate with the government, describing it as a witch hunt orchestrated by the Turkish state to repress the Kurdish refugees' political activities and collective struggle.

12.8 Summary

This chapter has discussed turning points after SYRIZA's election in January 2015, focusing on the July 2015 bailout referendum, the refugee solidarity movement and the 2016 EU–Turkey refugee deal. By critically engaging with Slavoj Žižek's positions on these turning points, the chapter highlighted the stakes of the referendum and SYRIZA's subsequent reversal of the popular mandate, and pointed to hidden potentialities of the referendum in line with post-colonial perspectives and a politics of rupture. It then offered a critical assessment of Žižek's positions on refugees, emphasising its Eurocentric connotations, Žižek's underestimation of the potentialities of immigrant struggles and

[249] This solidarity initiative was formed in autumn 2018 by several social and political collectives, including militant trade unions, social and solidarity collectives from various neighbourhoods of Athens, workers' collectives, political groups and even the Greek fans of the German St. Pauli football club (Dirakis, 2019: 46).

[250] The Kurdish women from Lavrio are in charge of organising protests on the annual International Women's Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (Dirakis, 2019: 51).

alliances, and his tendency to overestimate different ways of life, thus reinforcing the divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’ on the basis of the supposedly superior ‘Western European way of life’.

Following that, the chapter examined aspects of the EU–Turkey, deal connecting it to the EU’s and Australia’s refugee externalisation policies and highlighting their neo-colonial dimension. In addition, it linked the referendum and EU–Turkey deal as two illustrative moments of the prevailing TINA narrative, which, to some extent, paralysed the movement during and after 2015. Nonetheless, against this background of defeat and disorganisation, the refugee solidarity movement kept alive the militant traditions of the previous period. To provide a view on some aspects of the solidarity movement, the chapter included some preliminary findings on the squatted City Plaza hotel in relation to the activities of NSSIR; support groups for LGBTQI+ refugees in relation to a transgender refugee’s successful legal struggle to change her gender and name; and the squatted Lavrio Center of Temporary Stay for Foreign Asylum Seekers in relation to the activities of the Kurdistan Cultural Centre.

Conclusions

Expanding the Collective Imaginary: Cross-fertilisation and a New 'We' in the Making

The main objective of this final section is to synthesise the main findings of my research in light of the theoretical and methodological framework applied in this thesis. First, I formulate the following thesis based on my research: at their best, militant parts of the multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural, and multi-gendered working class managed to overcome fragmentation and fight as part of the same movement before and during the Greek crisis. Especially in the post-2008 period, the participation of immigrant activists in the anti-racist collectives, as well as the anti-austerity movement in its broad sense, created, in fact, a space of dialogue, interaction and common activity. The stories included in this study illustrate that immigrant activists contributed, in different ways, to a deeper understanding of the stakes of the crisis and a way out of it, often building on their past experiences. It appears that the Greek Left and anti-authoritarian scene, and, more broadly, the social movement as a whole, have a lot to learn from immigrant activists. I identify this cross-fertilisation of ideas and practices between immigrant and native activists as a major achievement in the process of constructing the 'unity of the diverse' (McNally, 2015). I describe this as a resignification of solidarity 'expanding the collective imaginary'.

Shedding light on the roots of these ideas and practices that immigrant activists bring , I devoted a part of the thesis speaking about the participants' political formation and experiences of struggle before their arrival in Greece. This proved to be a key part in my research, bringing to light transnational identities and solidarities connecting Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans and Western Europe. The findings disrupt the Eurocentric assumption that immigrant activists discovered politics after arriving in Europe and underline the abundance of anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, anti-racist and anti-fascist ideas and practices that remain so influential. It is important to note that many of the life-history interviews presented in this thesis offered insightful comments on the main aspects of the theoretical

framework. To cite a characteristic example, Khatib and Bah enriched the discussion on Eurocentrism and the anti-colonial legacy. By revealing these alternative geographies of resistance, the thesis aspires to contribute to de-colonising activism and help build a bridge between the multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural and multi-gendered working classes in Europe and 'the common fund of revolutionary experience in the rest of the world'.[251]

This brings us to the question of Greece's own national past and its contribution to the global common fund of revolutionary experience. The research findings highlight how the memory of the anti-fascist resistance in WWII and the 1973 Athens Polytechnic uprising became points of reference for immigrant activists who participated in practices of commemoration and related them to their own contemporary struggles. I paid special attention to the role of old anti-fascist resistance fighters, such as Manolis Glezos, alongside the immigrant workers. As a way forward, I propose rethinking cross-fertilisation in tandem with Featherstone's (2013: 1409) understanding of internationalism as something more than exchanges between already constituted socialist traditions in different nations:

> Problematizing the constitution of left national traditions is a condition of possibility for understanding more plural and relational histories and geographies of the left. This involves locating left political organizing as already bound up in negotiating geographies of connection, rather than being formed as discrete national left projects and then networked through internationalist practices.
>
> (Featherstone, 2013: 1410)

In light of these comments, it is important to recall that the interviewees from neighbouring countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Turkey) situated Greece's national past within the common historical context of the Balkans and underlined that the Greek anti-fascist resistance influenced their own political formation long before their arrival in Greece. At the same time, research findings reveal that the impact of the Greek history of the 20th century on the activist youth of immigrant origin is more contradictory,

[251] The British journalist and historian Basil Davidson (1973: 284) notes that the most important part of Cabral's legacy was his knowledge of how to build a firm bridge between the African people and what was identified as the 'the common fund of revolutionary experience in the rest of the world'.

including creative dialogues with the past, as well as a feeling that the weight of tradition is hindering them from developing their own forms of activism outside pre-constituted forms.

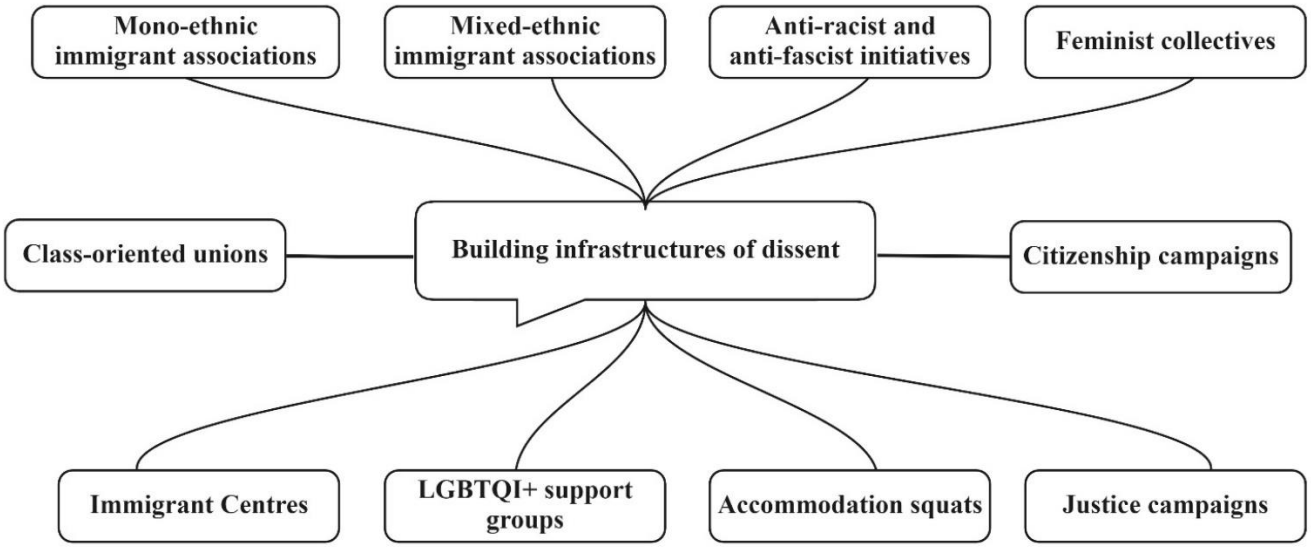
Based on the above considerations, I identify cross-fertilisation as a constitutive element of a new 'We' in the making. The rhythm of this process is determined by the emergent 'culture of solidarity'. The new 'We' is constructed step by step in daily interactions, common struggles and struggles within struggles. This key finding cuts across the case studies and provides a view of what constitutes 'best practice activism'. In what follows, I relate cross-fertilisation to specific contributions to each struggle, focusing on organising successes, as well as shortcomings.

Seeing Through the Eyes of the Interviewees: Questions of Organisation, Alliances and Litigation

As opposed to post-hegemonic approaches, this thesis paid special attention to the 'organisational question', examining different types of organisational structures and alliances related to immigrant militancy. To this end, empirical evidence was introduced from a wide variety of cases, mainly in Athens, Crete and Manolada. More specifically, it appears that immigrants have created and participated in different types of structures with the intention of addressing exploitation, immigration system injustice, and oppressions of race and gender. While some of the interviewees did not belong to any political party or particular organisation, others were cadres, members or close allies of Greek Left parties. Considering their diverse political affiliations and different positions in the movement, it appears that some of them contribute to more than one of the following structures:[252]

[252] Flesher Fominaya (2007) has characterised this phenomenon as multi-militancy.

Table 1: Different types of structures



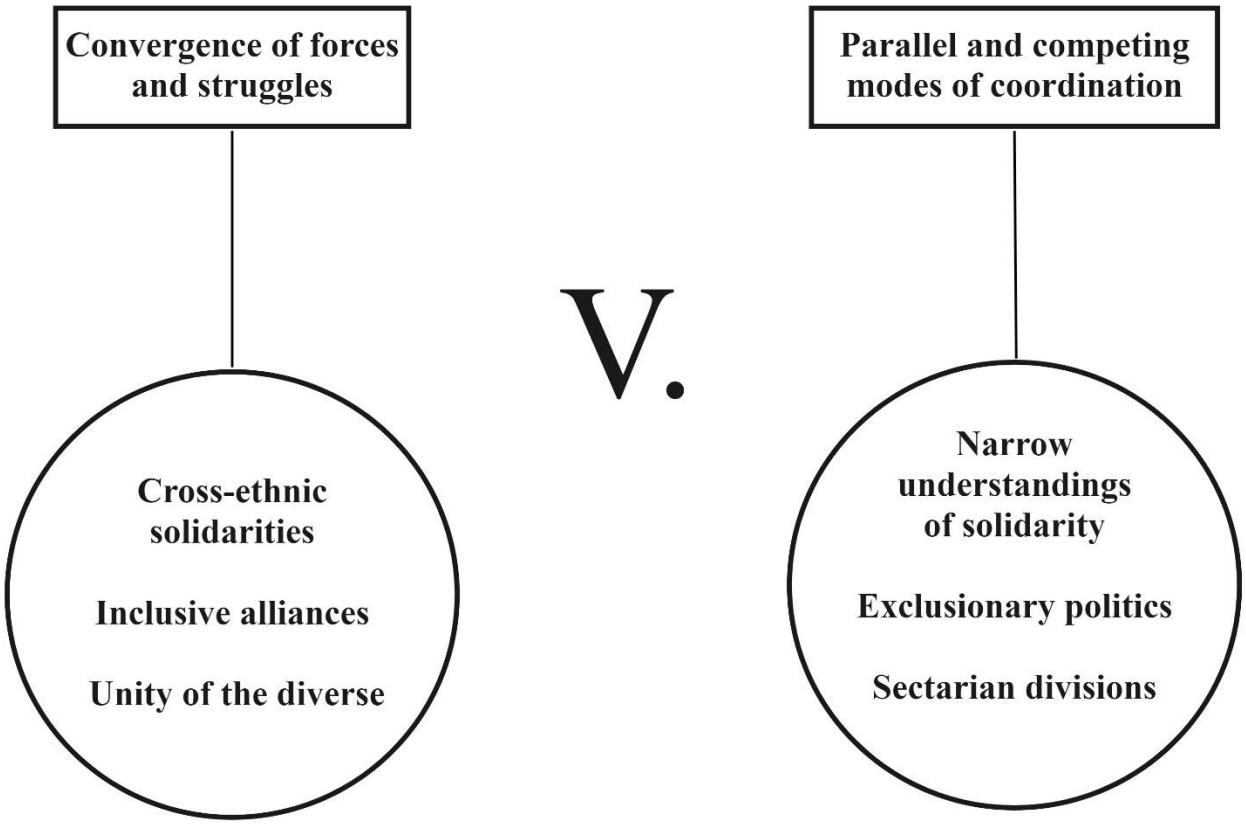
While it was very useful to include so many different types of organisations in order to grasp, as much as possible, the totality of immigrant struggles, I had to negotiate the project's time constraints and space limitations. This resulted in my having to out certain aspects of the cases that could have shed more light on certain issues raised by the research questions. Overall, the findings provide a wide view of different types of social and political alliances between the different forces of the movement. In that respect, the following observations stand out:

In many cases, the research findings highlight the existence of parallel and often competing modes of coordination.[253] Leaving blame games aside, coordination failure appears to be a serious problem that must be solved. For example, Chapters 9 and 10 described two parallel modes of coordination between immigrant associations related to the NSSIR and KKE respectively. While they were both fighting for similar issues in the early 2000s (e.g., legalising all immigrants, equal rights etc.), it appears that they did not unite their forces in action. Similarly, Chapter 11 concluded that more effective coordination between PAME, the BIWUG, the UIW and the KEERFA could have achieved better results in terms

[253] Kanellopoulos *et al.* (2017) reach a similar conclusion, focusing more on the role of the Greek Left and trade unions in the anti-austerity movement.

of solidarity with the struggle of the immigrant farmworkers in Manolada. By contrast, Chapter 8 highlighted the level of unity that was ultimately achieved between the different forces of the broader movement in the struggle against Golden Dawn, effectively constructing the unity of the diverse. The impressive results of this struggle point to a united front tactic, resignifying the old formula 'march separately, strike together'.

Table 2: Modes of coordination



Turning to the divisions within and between the immigrant communities, the following are indicative examples:

a) the Pakistani Community's internal debates over anti-fascism, agenda setting and alliances;

b) the hierarchies between immigrant farmworkers in Manolada;

c) divisions related to gender asymmetry and patriarchal social relations;

d) the exclusion of undocumented immigrants by those immigrant associations in which membership depends on legal status.

However, the findings show that fragmentation is not an objectively inescapable condition and the following appear to be the most crucial factors in overcoming it: articulating inclusive demands, promoting cross-ethnic solidarities and standing against all forms of social oppression. These could be identified as constitutive elements of 'best practice activism'. By applying the conceptual frames and tools inspired by CCS and SRT, the research findings enhance the formulations around 'acts of citizenship'. Further, building on SRT and intersectionality theory, research paid attention to the dangers of activist practices that may be 'best' for some but perpetuate the oppression of others. While the findings highlight the potential of the construction of 'class-based, feminist, and anti-racist "We"', at the same time they illustrate the contradictions of this process and the fragile nature of the related achievements. Therefore, standing against all forms of social oppression means, first and foremost, fighting against racism, sexism and other forms of oppression within the activist circles. The implications of this finding for solidarity and 'best practice activism' are discussed in Chapters 4 and 4 and requires further exploration in future research exploring aspects, such as white allyship and separatist organising.

While many of the research questions addressed daily interactions and campaigning methods in long-term processes, I paid special attention to the role of these organisational structures in 'turning points', or what Lukács (2000: 55) calls 'moments of decision' ('Augenblick'). In that respect, the following two findings stand out. First, in many cases, immigrant associations and their allies were capable of building momentum in situations requiring quick and risky decisions in a context of uncertainty. Second, despite being exposed to extreme forms of violence, police repression and union-busting tactics, immigrant workers' determination to continue the struggle and the drive for union organising repeatedly prevailed over fear. Any serious attempt to forge a new labour movement has much to learn from all the militant and class-oriented unions included in this thesis.

Further, the research findings confirm my initial hypothesis that a deeper understanding of 'turning points' requires careful consideration of the often-overlooked links between these 'events' and prior moments of struggle. In particular, on the basis of my research, I argue that immigrant participation in the December 2008 uprising was the culmination of a long chain of prior protest events. Relating immigrant activism during the 2000s to immigrant participation during and after 'December' aspires to expand the 'collective imagination', resignify the memory of the events and highlight the longstanding legacy of the uprising. Turning to the post-2008 period, the empirical evidence confirmed the hypothesis that immigrant workers took the lead in decisive moments of the struggle, especially between 2011 and 2013. The 2011 mass hunger strike and the 2013 Manolada farmworkers' movement are characteristic examples. In general, it appears that a minority of Greece's immigrant population skilfully linked the immigrant struggles to a broader agenda against the memorandum agreements and austerity measures and contributed to a convergence of forces and struggles. The interviews added to an analysis of the Greek crisis through the lens of immigration.

Concerning litigation, the rich research material sheds light on the complex relationship between legal battles and extra-juridical action. The thesis highlights that success or failure is a more complicated issue if a legal struggle is based on collective action and appeals to the wider public. For example, two of the cases examined, those of the abducted Pakistanis and Kuneva, were filed. However, they both demonstrate how legal battles can be used to mobilise extra-legal public opinion. Further, the findings show that litigation can result in major achievements for the movement. In that respect, the most characteristic example is the trial of Golden Dawn. Conversely, the case of the farmworkers in Manolada reveals the consequences of the legal defeat in the national court and the motivation needed to appeal to the ECHR. The thesis proposes that a more organic link between the solidarity networks and the legal struggle in the Manolada case could have maximised the potential of the legal victory to help eliminate labour trafficking.

In all cases, the findings disrupt legal nihilist approaches and demonstrate that filing complaints and demanding a thorough investigation from the state can, under certain conditions, trigger collective action instead of hindering it. My analysis of legal strategies and the way I define legal victories and legal defeats is based on my assumption that the political aim is the main criterion in order to determine which legal strategies fit to each case. In this context, strategic litigation is redefined as a legal struggle subordinated to the needs, priorities and strategies of the mass movement. Of course, there are differences between the legal cases included in this study, While, in all cases, what really matters is reclaiming political subjectivity, different types of litigation have been examined in this study and a comparative analysis of the different legal struggles is a challenge for future research. It is important to add that the interviews with participants in these justice campaigns, including applicants before the ECHR, facilitated seeing the legal struggles through the eyes of the research participants, and, in addition, provided a view of asylum procedures as terrains of struggle. Further, the lawyers contributed to the discussion with their theoretical reflections on their own legal practice in the cases examined in the thesis, shedding light on several types of lawyering related to the labour, anti-fascist, and LGBTQI+ movement and potentially resignifying strategic litigation for immigrant rights.

Finally, the difficulties in attempting to apply a co-strategising method in the context of academic research should not be ignored. After all, as Fantasia (1988: 111) argues, the roots of the emergent 'culture of solidarity' lie 'in the *praxis* of solidarity, and not in abstract ideas'. Despite the limitations of academic research, which I acknowledge, I tried to apply in this thesis the method identified in Chapter 1 as co-strategising research. In line with this method, I identify cross-fertilisation as the main aim of the interview in the context of co-strategising research.

'Don't Start from the Good Old Things but the Bad New Ones'

At the end of *Conversations with Brecht*, Walter Benjamin (1973: 57) quotes the above Brechtian maxim. In this thesis, I decided not to follow this advice; instead, following Althusser, I tried not to write in terms of subjective urgency (Althusser in Macchiocchi, 1973: 23). As Althusser (in Macchiocchi, 1973: 23) expresses it: 'Politics is a protracted war. Do not be in a hurry. Try to see things far in advance, and know how to wait, today. Don't live in terms of subjective urgency. Know, too, how to put your defeats to use.' Of course, this was not at all an easy task considering the obstacles that arose during the writing process and aspects of the extra-ordinary situation in Greece and internationally, including: a) the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic; b) the near-to-war escalation of border violence at Greece's land border with Turkey at Evros river; c) the Greek government's anti-immigrant policies, which become worse and worse after the governmental change in the 2019 general elections; d) the living hell that refugees face in Lesvos detention centres and the significant rise in xenophobic attacks on the island.

In any event, the issues addressed in this thesis are even more urgent for immigrants and refugees in light of the pandemic and state responses to it as well as post-pandemic challenges. By highlighting past victories, drawing lessons from defeats and identifying 'best practice' activism, this thesis is a reminder of the potentialities of the autonomous popular will, or in other words, a wake-up call to break with what Galeano (in Witmer, 2006) defines as 'the culture of impotence'. At this point, it is important to make one last clarification for ethical reasons. The positions taken in this thesis on December 2008, the squares movement and the 2015 referendum are my own. Some of the research participants may agree, and others may disagree; I hope that we will have the opportunity to continue the dialogue on the tactics and strategy of the movement in even more collaborative ways.

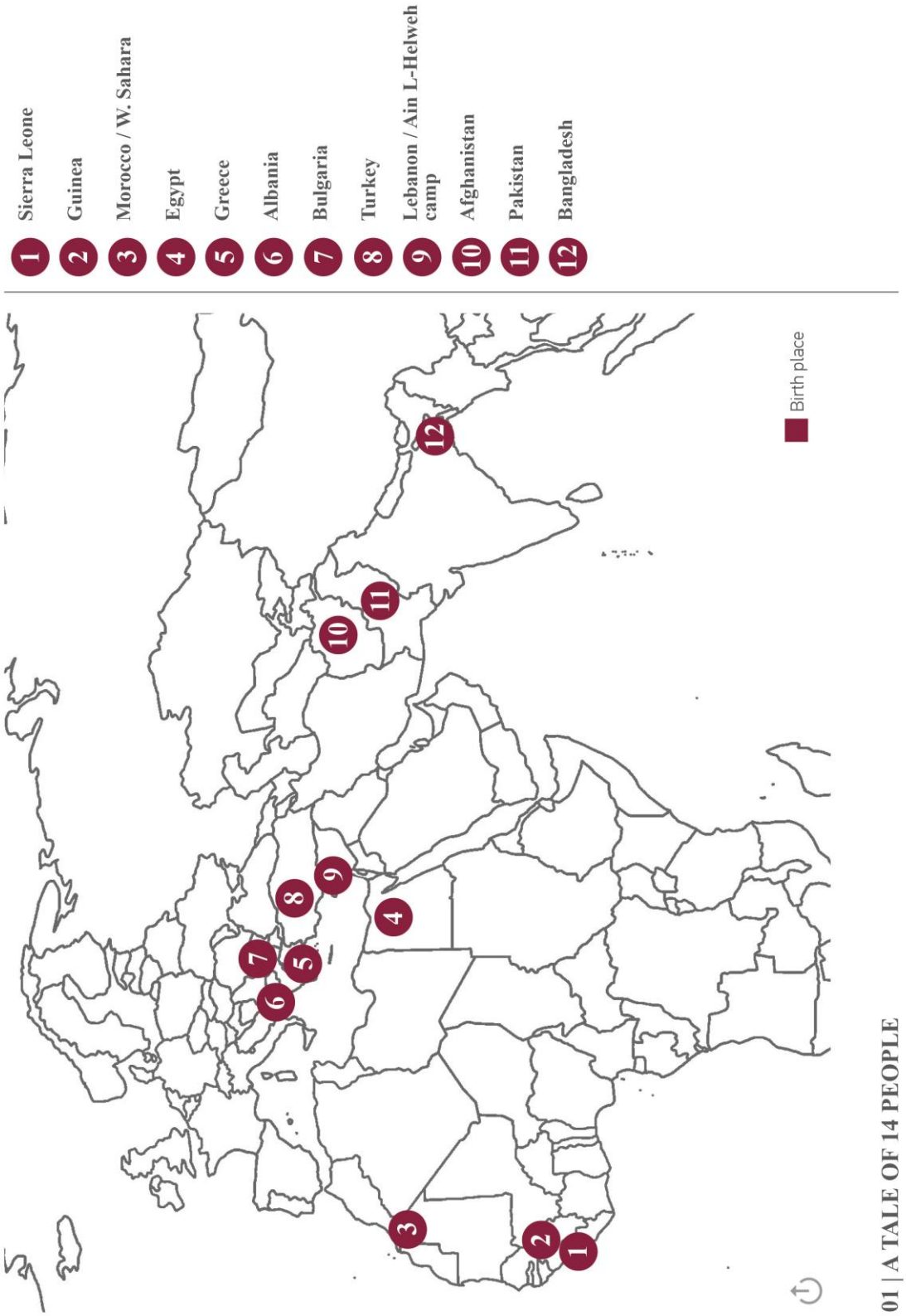
Appendix 1: List of interviews

Name of the interviewee	Place	presented in
Interviews with immigrant activists		
Konstantina Kuneva	Athens	Chapter 4
Michael Afolayan	Athens	Chapter 5
Loretta Macauley	Athens	Chapter 5
Javed Aslam	Athens	Chapter 6, 8
Mohammed Khatib	Brussels	Chapter 7
Mamadou Bah	Brussels	Chapter 7
Liljana Saliaj	Athens	Chapter 9
ML*	Athens	Chapter 9
Seyit Aldoğan	Athens	Chapter 10
Ahmet Mustafa	Athens	Chapter 10
Morshed Chowdury	Athens	Chapter 11
Nasim Lomani	Athens	Chapter 12
Bercem Mordeniz	Athens	Chapter 12
Ali*	Athens	Chapter 12

Name of the interviewee	Place	presented in
Interviews with lawyers		
Kostas Papadakis	Athens	Chapter 4, 8
Thanasis Kampagiannis	Athens	Chapter 8
Vasilis Archimandritis	Athens	Chapter 10
Vasilis Kerasiotis	Athens	Chapter 11
Katerina Georgiadou	Thessaloniki	Chapter 12
Eleni Spathana	Athens	Chapter 12

** the interviewee used an alias*

Appendix 2: Maps



1 Athens
2 Lavrio
3 Aspropyrgos
4 Patra
5 Manolada
6 Skala Lakonias
7 Chania
8 Rethymno
9 Samos
10 Lesvos
11 Evros river
12 Thessaloniki
13 Idomeni

1 Syntagma square
2 Omonoia square
3 Exarchia
4 Kypseli
5 Aghios Panteleimon
6 Patisia
7 Kerameikos / Metaxourgeio
8 Petralona
9 Kallithea
10 Piraeus
11 Nikaia
12 Keratsini
13 Perama
14 Metamorphosi

03 | “ATHENS IS THE FIRST SPARK”

Appendix 3: Ethical approval and sample Consent Form

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference HUM 19/ 040 in the Department of Humanities and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 11.06.19.

Consent form in English

University of Roehampton London

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of research project: Rethinking Political Subjectivity: Immigrant Activism during the Greek Crisis (2008 - 15)

Brief description of research project and what participation involves:

This research project examines (im)migrant struggles in Greece after 2008 within the context of the global capitalist crisis and the crisis in Greece. Taking into account, on the one hand, the alarming rise in racism and xenophobia and, on the other hand, social movements, solidarity practices and political polarization due to the austerity programmes, my working hypothesis is that (im)migrant struggles had, under these circumstances, a strategic importance for 'the social movement as a whole'. The political, philosophical and scientific implications of this importance remain rather under examined. In order to contribute to this discussion, this research turns to political philosophy and an inquiry into subjectivity aiming at a deeper understanding of (im)migrants' praxis and class consciousness in the broadest sense, examining both class exploitation and various oppressions based on race, gender, residency status. This research project focuses on two levels and their mutual effects, i.e. (im)migant grassroots organizing and legal struggles. The theoretical concepts are concretised in terms of the Greek social and political context in the period under research. At this stage, the research entails conducting life history interviews with 15 activists, (im)migrants and refugees, who have participated in different kind of political organizing and collective practice. Another 5 open-ended semi-structured interviews will be conducted with lawyers related to migrant communities' justice campaigns and litigation.

Regarding the interview it is important to inform you that it will be conducted face-to-face in a place of your choice, it will last approximately two hours and it will be audio recorded. Instead of questionnaires, a topic guide will be used to draw attention to the issues of great interest for the research. The researcher will afterwards comment briefly and a dialogue is encouraged within the timeframe agreed. Emphasis is put on dialogue, interaction and collaboration following a co-research approach seeing the participant as peer-researcher as far as possible. Your personal data will be used for the research purposes in the public interest. This project aims at reinforcing anti-xenophobic stances, developing a framework that enables social alliances, promoting class-based anti-racist politics and elaborating the strategic directions, limitations and potentials of (im)migrant struggles.

Your interview will not be included in full in the thesis. A summary and excerpts will be included following both a chronological and a thematic model. You choose how to be named and can change your mind throughout the research until the submission of the thesis. If you wish to remain anonymous you will be asked to choose a pseudonym and your identity will be protected in the thesis and the publication (eg. articles in scientific journals) of any findings. If you choose to waive the right to anonymity, this should be clearly stated by ticking the relevant box (see below). In that case you should take under careful consideration if this choice can have any consequences for your safety, legal status etc. Third parties discussed in the interviews will be anonymized either way. In case you feel any emotional discomfort, the interview will be interrupted. The researcher will keep confidential all information you ask to remain off the record and sensitive personal data that might cause harm.

You can withdraw at any point without giving a reason. If you withdraw, your data may not be erased but will only be used in an anonymised form. Your data will be kept in accordance with the University of Roehampton's Record Retention Schedule and may be retained indefinitely in an anonymised form.

Investigator contact details:

Konstantinos Gousis
Humanities Department
University of Roehampton
Roehampton Lane
London, SW15 5PU
gousisk@roehampton.ac.uk
+302130068507

Consent statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason by contacting Konstantinos Gousis. I understand that if I do withdraw, my data may not be erased but will only be used in an anonymised form as part of an aggregated dataset. I understand that the personal data collected from me during the course of the project will be used for the purposes outlined above in the public interest.

If you wish to waive your right to anonymity please tick (check) this box. In case this box is checked your name will appear in the final thesis. In that case the researcher still ensures compliance with all relevant data protection policies and legislation.

By signing this form, you are confirming that you have read, understood and agree with the University's Data Privacy Notice for Research Participants.

The information you have provided will be treated in confidence by the researcher and your identity will be protected in the publication of any findings. The purpose of the research may change over time, and your data may be re-used for research projects by the University in the future. If this is the case, you will normally be provided with additional information about the new project.

Name …….

Signature ……

Date ……

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator or the Director of Studies. However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact Prof. Sylvia Ellis

Director of Studies contact details:
Dr Nina Power (Dept. of Humanities)
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sylvia.ellis@roehampton.ac.uk
0044 020 8392 5794

Consent form in Greek

ΈΝΤΥΠΟ ΣΥΓΚΑΤΑΘΕΣΗΣ ΣΥΜΜΕΤΟΧΗΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΑ

Τίτλος του ερευνητικού προγράμματος: Να ξανασκεφτούμε το πολιτικό υποκείμενο: Ακτιβισμός των μεταναστών/στριών στην Ελλάδα της κρίσης (2008 – 15)

Σύντομη περιγραφή του ερευνητικού προγράμματος και τι περιλαμβάνει η συμμετοχή στην έρευνα:

Το ερευνητικό πρόγραμμα εξετάζει τους αγώνες των μεταναστών και μεταναστριών που έλαβαν χώρα στην Ελλάδα μετά το 2008 και το ξέσπασμα της παγκόσμιας καπιταλιστικής κρίσης και της κρίσης στην Ελλάδα. Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη, από τη μια πλευρά, την ιδιαιτέρως ανησυχητική άνοδο του ρατσισμού και της ξενοφοβίας και, από την άλλη, τα κοινωνικά κινήματα, τις πρακτικές αλληλεγγύης και την πολιτική πόλωση λόγω των προγραμμάτων λιτότητας, η ερευνητική υπόθεση είναι ότι οι μεταναστευτικοί αγώνες, σε αυτές τις συνθήκες, είχαν στρατηγική σημασία για «το κίνημα ως σύνολο». Τα φιλοσοφικά, επιστημονικά και πολιτικά συνεπαγόμενα αυτής της σημασίας έχουν, σε γενικές γραμμές, εξεταστεί ανεπαρκώς. Συμβάλλοντας σε αυτή τη συζήτηση, το ερευνητικό αυτό πρόγραμμα στρέφεται στην πολιτική φιλοσοφία και σε μια έρευνα της υποκειμενικότητας με στόχο την βαθύτερη κατανόηση της πρακτικής των μεταναστών/στριών και της ταξικής τους συνείδησης με την ευρύτερη έννοια, εξετάζοντας τόσο την ταξική εκμετάλλευση όσο και τις πολλαπλές καταπιέσεις βάσει φυλής, φύλου και καθεστώτος παραμονής. Η έρευνα θα εστιάσει σε δύο επίπεδα δράσης και τις μεταξύ τους αμοιβαίες επιδράσεις και συγκεκριμένα την οργάνωση των μεταναστών/στριών σε επίπεδο βάσης και τους νομικούς αγώνες. Οι θεωρητικές έννοιες θα συγκεκριμενοποιηθούν στο κοινωνικό και πολιτικό πλαίσιο της Ελλάδας την περίοδο μελέτης. Στο στάδιο αυτό, η έρευνα περιλαμβάνει τη διεξαγωγή 15 συνεντεύξεων με ιστορίες ζωής ακτιβιστών/στριών, μεταναστων/στριών και προσφύγων/ισσών, που έχουν συμμετάσχει σε διάφορα επίπεδα πολιτικής οργάνωσης και συλλογικής δράσης. Άλλες 5 ανοικτού τύπου ημι-δομημένες συνεντεύξεις θα διεξαχθούν με δικηγόρους που σχετίζονται με τις καμπάνιες των μεταναστευτικών κοινοτήτων και σχετικούς δικαστικούς αγώνες.

Ως προς τη συνέντευξη είναι σημαντικό να σας ενημερώσω ότι θα διαρκέσει περίπου δύο ώρες, θα βρεθούμε από κοντά σε τόπο της επιλογής σας και θα ηχογραφηθεί. Αντί ερωτηματολογίου, θα χρησιμοποιηθεί ένας οδηγός θεματολογίας προκειμένου να δώσει έμφαση στα ζητήματα που είναι ιδιαιτέρως ενδιαφέροντα για την έρευνα. Κατόπιν, ως ερευνητής θα κάνω κάποια σύντομα σχόλια ενθαρρύνοντας το μεταξύ μας διάλογο μέσα στα χρονικά πλαίσια στα οποία έχουμε συμφωνήσει. Δίνεται έμφαση στο διάλογο, την αλληλεπίδραση και τη συνεργασία, καθώς ακολουθώ μια προσέγγιση συν-έρευνας, όπου οι συμμετέχοντες/ουσες είναι, όσο το δυνατόν, από κοινού ερευνητές/τριες. Τα προσωπικά σας δεδομένα θα χρησιμοποιηθούν για τους σκοπούς της έρευνας προς το δημόσιο συμφέρον. Σκοπός της έρευνας είναι η ενίσχυση θέσεων ενάντια στην ξενοφοβία, η διαμόρφωση ενός πλαισίου που να διευκολύνει τις κοινωνικές συμμαχίες, να προωθεί ταξικές αντιρατσιστικές πολιτικές και να εντοπίζει στρατηγικές κατευθύνσεις, περιορισμούς και δυνατότητες

των μεταναστευτικών αγώνων. Η συνέντευξή σας δε θα περιληφθεί στο σύνολό της στη διατριβή. Θα περιληφθούν αποσπάσματα και μια περίληψη ακολουθώντας ένα χρονολογικό και θεματικό μοντέλο. Εσείς επιλέγετε εάν θα εμφανιστεί το όνομά σας στην έρευνα και μπορείτε σχετικά με αυτό να αλλάξετε γνώμη καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια της έρευνας μέχρι και την κατάθεση της διατριβής. Εάν θέλετε να διατηρήσετε το δικαίωμα στην ανωνυμία θα κληθείτε να επιλέξετε ένα ψευδώνυμο και η ταυτότητά σας θα προστατευθεί στη διατριβή και σε κάθε δημοσίευση αποτελεσμάτων της έρευνας (πχ. άρθρα σε επιστημονικά περιοδικά). Εάν επιλέξετε να παραιτηθείτε από το δικαίωμα στην ανωνυμία, χρειάζεται να το δηλώσετε ξεκάθαρα τσεκάροντας το αντίστοιχο κουτάκι (δείτε παρακάτω). Σε αυτή την περίπτωση να λάβετε σοβαρά υπόψη εάν η επιλογή αυτή θα έχει οποιαδήποτε συνέπεια στην ασφάλεια, τη νομική σας κατάσταση κτλ. Σε κάθε περίπτωση, οποιεσδήποτε αναφορές σε τρίτα πρόσωπα θα παραμείνουν ανώνυμες. Σε περίπτωση συναισθηματικής δυσφορίας η συνέντευξη θα διακόπτεται. Ο ερευνητής δεσμεύεται σε κάθε σχετική δημοσίευση να κρατήσει εμπιστευτική κάθε πληροφορία ζητήσετε να παραμείνει εκτός καταγραφής και κάθε προσωπικό δεδομένο μπορεί να προξενήσει βλάβη.

Μπορείτε να αποσύρετε τη συμμετοχή σας από την έρευνα οποιαδήποτε στιγμή χωρίς να δώσετε κάποια εξήγηση. Σε αυτή την περίπτωση τα δεδομένα που έχουν συλλεγεί δεν διαγράφονται αλλά μπορούν να χρησιμοποιηθούν μόνον σε ανώνυμη μορφή. Τα δεδομένα σας θα κρατηθούν σε συμφωνία με το Πρόγραμμα Διατήρησης Καταγραφών του Πανεπιστημίου του Ρόεχαμπτον. Τα ερευνητικά δεδομένα μπορούν να διατηρηθούν επ' αόριστον από τους/τις ερευνητές/τριες σε ανώνυμη μορφή.

Στοιχεία επικοινωνίας του ερευνητή:

Κωνσταντίνος Γούσης
Τμήμα Ανθρωπιστικών Σπουδών
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+302130068507

Δήλωση συγκατάθεσης:

Συμφωνώ να λάβω μέρος στην έρευνα, και γνωρίζω ότι ελεύθερα μπορώ να αποσύρω τη συμμετοχή μου χωρίς να δώσω οποιαδήποτε εξήγηση ενημερώνοντας τον Κωνσταντίνο Γούση. Καταλαβαίνω ότι εάν αποσύρω τη συμμετοχή μου, τα δεδομένα μου μπορεί να μην διαγραφούν αλλά θα χρησιμοποιηθούν μόνον σε ανώνυμη μορφή ως τμήμα των συνολικά συγκεντρωμένων δεδομένων. Καταλαβαίνω ότι τα προσωπικά μου δεδομένα τα οποία θα συλλεγούν στην πορεία του ερευνητικού προγράμματος θα χρησιμοποιηθούν για τους σκοπούς που συνοψίζονται πιο πάνω προς το δημόσιο συμφέρον.

Εάν επιθυμείτε να παραιτηθείτε από το δικαίωμα στην ανωνυμία, σας παρακαλώ τσεκάρετε το κουτάκι. Τότε το όνομά σας θα εμφανιστεί στις σχετικές δημοσιεύσεις σε συμφωνία με τις πολιτικές για την προστασία δικαιωμάτων.

Υπογράφοντας αυτή τη φόρμα, επιβεβαιώνετε ότι έχετε διαβάσει, κατανοήσει και συμφωνείτε με όσα καταγράφονται στο έντυπο του Πανεπιστημίου «Δήλωση για την προστασία των δεδομένων όσων συμμετέχουν στην έρευνα».

Οι πληροφορίες που θα δώσετε θα είναι εμπιστευτικές ως προς τη χρήση τους από τον ερευνητή και η ταυτότητά σας θα προστατευθεί στη δημοσίευση των ευρημάτων. Ο σκοπός της έρευνας μπορεί να αλλάξει με το πέρασμα του χρόνου και το Πανεπιστήμιο μπορεί να χρησιμοποιήσει τα δεδομένα εκ νέου για ερευνητικούς σκοπούς. Στην περίπτωση αυτή, κανονικά θα λάβετε σχετική επιπλέον ενημέρωση για το νέο ερευνητικό πρότζεκτ.

Ονοματεπώνυμο ……..

Υπογραφή ……

Ημερομηνία ……

Παρακαλώ σημειώστε: Εάν έχετε οποιαδήποτε ανησυχία για οποιαδήποτε πτυχή της συμμετοχής σας ή άλλες ερωτήσεις, σας παρακαλώ να τις θέσετε σε μένα (τον ερευνητή) ή την επιβλέπουσα και υπεύθυνη της μελέτης Dr. Nina Power. Ωστόσο, εάν θέλετε να επικοινωνήσετε με κάποιο τρίτο πρόσωπο ανεξάρτητο από τη μελέτη, μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε με την καθηγήτρια κ. Sylvia Ellis.

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